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PROVIDENCE.

PROVIDENCE.

Yours sincerely
Henry Edwards

PROVIDENCE

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LONDON
LONGMAN AND [illegible]

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PROVIDENCE;

A POEM,

IN FOUR CANTOS:

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

BY

HENRY EDWARDS, PH. D., D. D.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXLIV.

To

The Rev. JOSEPH HYATT.

Dear Sir,

The day for high patronage, with a few exceptions, has long since passed, and dedication, therefore, is now more justly and properly restricted to the expression of friendship, gratitude, esteem, and respect; feelings which have never been entertained by many servile dedicators, who have been repaid in their own coin by those from whom they expected place or pension, but who have given them nought but words, and who have been ready to exclaim, though perhaps with as little justice as mercy,

> "Perish such patrons! to such sons of verse,
> For ever peace! they all deserve a hearse."

I can truly go on to say with the same poet, who has thus recorded my own feelings;

> "But when constrain'd to follow fashion's mode,
> I scorn to tread the common hackney'd road."

In offering you these volumes, I feel assured of a better, of a kindly return, knowing that I shall have been

expressing your sentiments and feelings as well as my own, and that you will in the gift, look at the heart and hand that gives rather than at the sumptuousness of the votive offering.

My object in this poem is to impress the idea of a God and Providence on the mind of the reader, and to rehearse the convictions of my own experience, as well as to enforce those important moral sentiments which ought ever to influence our best feelings, and which, therefore, appear to me to become the didactive muse.

I am aware of imperfections in the Author as well as the Printer, but must state, in excuse of such as you will at once see to be typographical, which in some instances have extended to the line, that owing to distance, and the consequent delay that would be occasioned, I could only correct the press, and that imperfectly, but once. Extensive engagements with the periodical press and in general literature, with other avocations, have prevented my giving that careful revision which so large a volume of poetry requires. But I feel assured that you, as well as others, will be lenient towards any occasional marks of carelessness, and will feel disposed to favor one whose object is not to indulge in wild flights of fancy, which often only serve to weaken the mind, or prolix illustration, which, however pleasing, is often

nothing but a repetition of truths before expressed, without adding to their force, but to present truth in all its native charms,—appealing to the intellect and conscience as well as to the imagination and passions.

Sincerely praying that we and ours may continue to enjoy the smile of that good Providence which has ever hitherto assisted and blessed us, and with expressions of unfeigned gratitude for every token of kindness which friendship has prompted.

Believe me,

DEAR SIR,

Yours very cordially,

HENRY EDWARDS.

CANTO I.

"Monendus est Philippus ut desinat esse rector mundi."
Luther to Melancthon.

"Be careful for nothing." *Philippians* 4, *vi.*

ANALYSIS OF CANTO I.

THIS Poem opens with an invocation to Deity.—His condescension in permitting us to address His august Throne. —The sin and folly of those who never meditate on so good and glorious a Being.—The combined impiety and madness of the atheist.—Let God's reign be interrupted and the whole course of nature must also be interrupted, and all turn to disorder and destruction.—The light of unassisted Natural Theology sufficient to shed lustre on the natural attributes of God.—The varied proofs furnished by His works.—The heavens surveyed.—The illimitable extent of the universe.—The Divine attributes everywhere unfolded, and proved to be infinite—The earth sufficient proof of an all-presiding Deity, without reference to the heavenly bodies.—The properties of light.—The animated tribes that swarm on the earth.—The wondrous nature of life, the adaptations everywhere discernible.—The seasons, day and night.—Lament over man's forgetfulness of his Creator and Preserver.—The human body and soul still more striking displays of Deity.—Conscience testifies of a Supreme Lawgiver, Sovereign, and Judge.—Man's dissatisfaction with every pleasure and pursuit which do not terminate in God.—Some comparisons employed to illustrate the great truth, that design proves a Designer.—The necessity of a Providence inferred from creation.—The Author's firm adhesion to the doctrine.

PROVIDENCE.

CANTO I.

THOU God of Providence, who from on high,
Dost lend an ear when feeble mortals cry;
Read'st each new thought ere words that thought express,
The love and homage pious hearts confess.
Whose radiant smile of mercy can reveal
Those charms and joys which o'er the soul shall steal;
That all which earth presents to lure the heart,
Or mortals yield, fade, dwindle and depart,
'Till lost to all but Thee and Thy fond love,
On wings ethereal we mount up above;

And with enraptured, burning seraphs, sing
The boundless glories of the Eternal King.
Now deign to stoop, and with benignant eye,
View this attempt, and whilst I prostrate lie
Before Thy throne, let vivid lightenings play,
And earth's stern night be changed to heaven's bright day;
'Till each dark chink no more appears obscure,
And each faint image flashes bright and pure.
The soul adorned with gifts and grace divine,
Shall with her lustre, things once gross refine,
And speaking loud Thine all-controlling power,
Imbibe Thy grace as the parch'd soil the shower.
But, oh! Thou Great Eternal, how shall man
Attempt or hope Thy Providence to scan?
With wingless spirit can he think to fly
To themes far loftier than the vaulted sky,

And draw from earthly fount, the holy store
Of truth, which heavenly showers alone can pour?
How reach the depth, or climb the lofty height?
How scale the walls which bound all mortal sight?
And with but infant drivelling power, how soar
To realms of day, which cherubim explore—
Or range the boundless fields that outstretch'd lie,
Farther than stars removed from angel's eye?
How paint the ever-varying hues and forms,
Or catch the hallowed glow that nature warms?
How rise or fall, or mete the Eternal plan,
That chose to make, then guide and govern man?

But though I pause, whilst with a holy fear,
I trace the Godhead's footsteps far and near,
Above, below, within, and all around,
Where insects sport, and mighty planets bound;

So lofty that heaven's myriads scarce proclaim,
With all their myriad choirs, His boundless fame;
Whose word could quench the mightiest angel's breath,
And send him quivering to the shades of death;
Whose boundless power and wisdom baffle thought;
His works and ways more wond'rous when more sought;
Yet dread and awe are sweetly cheered by love,
Which bids me rise to chant His praise above;
And trust and hope, breathed in the voice of prayer,
Disarm the doubt that would cry out, forbear!

Fountain of Light and Life! direct a ray
To break the darkness, and to guide my way;
Grant me, not earth's vain treasures, but a mind
The noblest truths of noblest themes to find,
Joined with a heart those treasures to retain,
Longer than miser does his hoarded gain:

For such, whate'er they are, whate'er they be,
Are such alone because inspired by Thee!

O, born but yesterday! of dross and dust!
To brutes allied, is this thy vouchsafed trust?
To hear God's voice—behold His smiling face—
And all the wonders of His kingdom trace?
Will He not spurn thine efforts, and defy
Each thought that dares to reach His throne on high;
And as thy lips perverse pronounce His name,
In awful majesty thy verse disclaim?
Yea, more than this, as one insulted, cry,
Stay! daring mortal! sinner! or you die!
Thou condescending Ruler of the skies,
Such thoughts as these ne'er in Thy bosom rise.
To Thy dread name our thoughts unchecked we raise,
Our feet explore Thy providential maze.

Thyself even bid'st earth's children seek Thy face—
Thou holdest commune with a fallen race.
Yea, e'en the weakest, meanest of mankind,
Share in Thy favors, boundless, unconfin'd.

And where, O Thought, shall thy fleet pinions tend,
Unless to Him on whom all else depend;
Thy Sun, thy centre Life, thy All in All,
To Him direct thy powers, and prostrate fall.
Thy gifts are His, return His righteous due,
Let Him be never banished from thy view;
Him first and last, midst each new scene employ,
Thy hopes He'll crown and all thy fears destroy;
His law thy rule, His love thy sole desire,
Till in His arms He bids thee to expire;
Then when earth's days of mourning close in night,
Thy God shall be thy everlasting Light.

Poor thoughtless, vain, and impious worldly throng,
Strangers to Him who tunes the seraph's song,
Who guides his wing to far-off scenes to fly,
Where mortal thought ne'er ventured yet to hie;
That God who in all motion, moves; who lives
In all that breathes, and animation gives;
Breath of all breath, the Soul of every soul,
The Guide of guides, Controller of control;
Who thinks in all that thinks, who fills all space,
Whose mighty footsteps everywhere we trace;
No moment flies but each alike declares
That love and bounteous hand which each one shares.
Yet miracle of folly, sin, and woe,
Mysterious infidelity! thou foe
To God and man!—and dar'st thou rear thy head
Against the Sovereign Lord of quick and dead?

Shall every thought, but thought of Him, acquire
The power to ventilate the inward fire;
Each theme that art or science can afford,
Touch with its magic power each finest cord;
Each passing scene engage the burnished speech,
And trackless voids the Fancy's boundless reach;
Each lord of earth with servile homage crown'd,
Not on his own, but on another's ground!—
And yet Heaven's matchless and eternal King,
From whom all objects and all beings spring;
Lord of the universe, and Lord of all,
That move in heaven or on this earthly ball;
Forgot, despised—and like the meanest thing
That crawls the earth, or flutters with its wing;
Be banished from the world He made and blessed,
And never hear His name or works confessed.

Each gift perverted 'gainst His generous hand,
Each creature in His place supremely stand?—
O vile idolatry! both bold and blind,
Born of the wretched heart—the insensate mind;—
Exalting man, dethroning God, she flies
From all supremely good, and great, and wise;
Makes worlds of atoms, suns of specks that fly,
Struck from the meteor, to delude the eye,
And doomed before the breeze, to drift and die,
Whilst suns still pour their quenchless fire on high.
Then let not man array in pomp of state,
Ignobly vain and impotently great,
What man should pass in quick oblivion by,
Whilst the great Lord of Heaven and Earth draws nigh;
Who reigns serene in glories unsurpast,
Their pomp being darken'd and their day o'er-cast.

Dwells there below the heart that dares deny
A God above, unseen by mortal eye,
Yet seen in nature, seen in ev'ry spot
Where eye has fixed, lest reason be forgot.
Thou fool of fools! however learned-wise,
Who from all truth to each dire falsehood flies,
Wreathing an epithet for thy dark face,
Which fiends themselves would spurn as foul disgrace;
Who, trembling, ever see and feel all nigh
The angry God, they dread and yet defy.
Let this be true, and all from pole to pole
In wild amaze and mad destruction roll;
That gorgeous orb, whose inexhausted fires
For ages streamed, like some pale lamp expires.
And gentle Cynthia, borrowing of the sun,
Shall lose her beams, nor in her orbit run;

The planets which to Him ascribe their light,
Are quenched at once in everlasting night.
Millions of stars, in spaces where the eye
Can never pierce, with worlds that round them fly,
All, all, in gloom, no pomp of words declare,
Emit but blackness and a putrid air.

Each of the countless myriads now that throng
The boundless realms of ether, and with song
Of harmony enchant the attentive ear,
That listens rapt in muse in every sphere,
With horrid crash, with imprecations whirl
Through boundless space, wherever chance may hurl.
Discord for ever rages, thunders peal,
Feeling and thought in horrors, throb to feel
How the wide ruin gapes where'er you turn;
The universe but one sepulchral urn!

All one black frightful chaos, hark the knell!
Heaven shines no more, and nought remains but hell.

Ah impious brain, where once could rise the thought,
Still viler sophist heart that such has taught,
What reason, sense, philosophy, abjure;
Trample on truth of all sure truth most sure;
Deny thyself, and doubt that thou art man,
Not e'en a dream, a vapour, or a span!
See here what must the virtuous heart appal,
The most terrific ruins of the fall;
The mystery sublime of sin and shame,
That dare obliterate Jehovah's name.

Blessed Revelation! shall we send for thee,
To tell us truths in which all hearts agree?
Denounce the oracle which all reveals,
On nature's path—which each hears, sees, and feels?

As well invoke great Sirus from his seat,
As though the sun refused us light and heat.
What need to prove what's written in the heart—
The truth which Nature's lessons all impart?—
But when we'd further learn, to thee we'll turn,
In humble ignorance, to search and learn.

Let thought inert, awake, and like the flame
She must ascend to heaven, from whence she came;
Wandering from thing to thing, and cause to cause,
From seeming accident, to certain laws;
At last, perplexed and overwhelmed, she flies
To the eternal God, supremely wise;
Like beams from rising sun, or sparks from fire,
Portrait of painter, or the child from sire;
So does the soul point to her heavenly source,
Her only Author, good, and life resource.

Or what can all more plainly be agreed,
Then that from nothing, nothing can proceed.
Creation ne'er creating power displays,
Nor mind nor matter in her varied phase.
No aura, fire, nor spirits subtile, strong,
No power of thought, no incantation song,
No art or science, that the wisest know,
Can ever make one stalk of grass to grow;
No object that has ever crossed man's eye,
Can, self-dependent, all its wants supply;
Nor self-existent, one in human mould,
Did ever history's page but once unfold.
Whence came the untold crowds, the earth that swarm,
Rich in diversity of power and form?
But from their fellows, by mysterious birth;
Their origin the same o'er all the earth.

And could our parents, without higher aid,
Such beings, with such powers, have ever made?
Have formed the eye to see, the ear to hear,
The blood to circulate so far and near?
Have known the bones and muscles, all in rows,
With all their varied fabrics to dispose,
To play their multiplied and curious feats,
And act in concert with each pulse that beats;
Breathe in the heavy clod the spark of life,
High reason join, all one, and without strife?
As well suppose the tree could make the seed
From which when sown another shall proceed,
The earth create the enamel on her face,
Or to some common tool art's wonders trace.
Nature's established laws, say what are they,
But God, who works in His own sovereign way?

Established, but how came they thus to be?—

All second causes, what are they but Thee?—

Thou first, efficient, *only* final, Cause,

The sole and universal Law of laws.

These laws but prove Thy greater power and skill,

That canst employ such means to work Thy will.

Thus when some mechanician's art we eye,

Which once in motion, needs no workman by,

More perfect it is styled than those that ask

The mind or body all its powers to task.

The world eternal, so the stagyrite taught,

Though when more wise, he wisely spurned the thought.

As well believe that *now* from *now* arose,

As one eternal causeless chain suppose,

That man, and all below him, now alive,

From chance, or from themselves their birth derive.

But make creation orator and guide;

Imagine Newton tutor by thy side,

Or some bright angel, such as Adam knew,

Whilst innocence its beauties round him threw,

One who has swept in thought the wide-spread sky,

And with his pinions o'er creation fly.

Become the pupil of the starry plains,

There learn and watch how God eternal reigns,

As fleet, as luminous as Sol's pure light,

Mount to some eminence far out of sight,

There catch a ray of glory from that sun

Round whom vast worlds in endless circuits run,

Who, though all liquid fire, does ne'er destroy;

Nature's best friend, her minister and joy;

Though ever moving, never out of place,

Just like the balls that round him speed their race.

Think of these fires that still as burning glow,
Those beams which still as inextinguished flow,
As when beheld by Alexander's train,
Or when He stopped for Joshua on the plain.
Let but this earth be made a funeral pyre,
A few brief hours would close the blazing fire,
And all but black and sun-burnt embers die,
Not so the mighty regent of the sky;
He still appears the same to set and rise,
And thirty worlds with light and heat supplies.
Weigh but the bulk of that stupendous globe,
Measure its girdle with a fine-spun robe;
Words may express, but thought palls to conceive
What seems too grand and glorious to believe.
Behold around him, as heaven's axle wheel,
Our own, and orbs more spacious, which all feel

The gravitating influence of his rays,

That wondrous law which every world obeys.

Think of the matchless forethought that you'll find,

All proving one great wise designing mind;

In each march and adjustment of these spheres,

How good, vast, and harmonious all appears!

No earthly horologe preserves such time,

No bells with equal melody can chime.

Each in their space, their awful rapid course,

The satellites to which some have recourse,

The belt of Saturn, and his beauteous ring,

The numerous moons which light to Herschel bring,

Bespeak a providential rule and care,

Exact and mighty, good beyond compare.

But what is this, our sun is but a star,

One seen 'mongst millions lost to worlds afar;

Each like himself enthroned a glorious king
Emblem of Him from whom all systems spring;
Whose bounty ever gives without return;
Whose lamp must light all other lamps that burn;
The sun and centre of all moral light;
Severed from whom each soul feels nought but night;
Round whom their gravitating point each sphere
Sustains one mighty, ever-glad career;
And as their myraids with new lustres shine,
For ever shout, These are not ours, but Thine!

Oh what a speck is earth, whilst we survey
The radiant wonders yonder heavens display.
What's the high towering mountain, capped in snow,
'Gainst whose broad breasts wild storms still vainly blow,
Whose lofty summit seems to touch the skies,
Whilst insignificance around it lies,

When with this huge and mighty ponderous orb
Whose spacious surface boundless seas absorb?
But how far less this world, how mighty mean,
When heaven's majestic glories crowd the scene;
The one but lisps, the other with loud voice
Thunders a God in whom they all rejoice.
The one speaks much, the other vastly more,
Till reason, lost, lies wrecked on fancy's shore.
How great that Being! who whilst He gems these spheres,
Adorns each dew-drop which in morn appears,
Glows in the worm as in the dazzling sun,
To whom bright day and blackest night are one;
Who on the stormy whirlwind rides at ease,
Or gently whispers in eve's softest breeze;
Who rolls those awful worlds that range the sky,
With noiseless speed and pomp, and wings the fly;

Whose works the most minute are quite as grand
As those vast systems which vast worlds command!
You may in all this world contains discern,
Worlds within worlds; where'er the eye you turn;
And in each world unseen to mortal eye,
You may alike a universe descry!
But does each leaf and limb a world appear,
Where power and skill divine still interfere;
You'll find the same athwart those starry skies,
When viewed by aid of telescopic eyes;
Within a leaf's dimensions you shall trace
Stars beyond count, all clustered in this space,
Where nought but blank the naked eye beholds,
System on system there the glass unfolds.
'Tis want of science, which fails to perceive,
A mind too small such glories to conceive.

Ambitious climb the skies, and soar afar,
And wing your flight beyond the highest star,
And on heaven's loftest pinnacle then stand,
Still brighter skies shall to your view expand,
And as you further track your venturous way,
The heavens now seen, be lost, nor dart one ray.
For where all now to man alone is light,
And where proud art must close her proudest flight,
That vast dimension has ne'er met the gaze
Of nobler natures, who have passed their days
In the oblivion of a far-off sky,
Nor ever thought of those that greet our eye.
Where are the suburbs of his wide domains,
Beyond which all is nought, or chaos reigns?
Tell me where doth Jehovah's empire end,
How far doth He His energies expend?

Yes tell me where, and you shall also say
The spot His name and laws shall cease to sway.
Boundless immensity must be His road,
If vast eternity is His abode;
Infinity of time, of space, and might,
Profusion boundless, infinite delight!
What then do these stupendous globes declare—
Heaven's retinue that walk the etheriel air,
Those certain laws by which they move or stand;
Are they not marks of His all-powerful hand?
How came the planets first to shine and speed,
With all their bulk to dance like lightest reed;
Though in themselves opaque, to borrow day
From heaven's proud regent, with no scanty ray;
Unwieldy masses in a minute fly
Further than e'er perceived by mortal eye,

With the same ease as arrows cut the air,
Nor yet for long-lived ages need repair;
Unlike poor erring man, that hates control,
They never wander to a lawless goal;
Presuming ne'er, on neighbour rights encroach,
Nor their own centre rashly near approach.
And when once embryo suns and systems rise,
Or comets with their train, o'erspread the skies,
Have they no master, and no summons own?
Created, formed, and ruled by chance alone;
Each perfect of itself, a mighty whole,
An inert mass, and yet a living soul;
If so the short-lived despots of a day,
They soon will crash, and all in ruins lay.
No; as in stately grandeur they recline
In heaven's vast battlements, in measured line,

Peopling each solitude, enriching space,
Which knows no deserts, with prolific race.
Although no voice is heard, sheckinah seen,
Of Him who shall be, and has ever been;
Speechless, in solemn majesty they cry,
To walking dust, just born to droop and die;
Nothings! immured in yonder earthly clod,
Be wise, be still, and know that I am God!
Yet need we not, thus far from earth to roam;
Let us observant tenants range at home;
Small though it be, a speck, an unknown spot,
And cursed by sin with many a cankered blot,
Less than a drop, compared to ocean streams,
Or to the sun the feeblest of his beams;
Yet even here, where'er our footsteps tread,
A sacred influence all around is spread;

A melody divine floats through the air;

The soul is feasted with ambrosial fare;

Praise sleeps or whispers, or with thunders roll'd,

In storm and sunshine, moist, dry, heat, and cold;

In every region seems inspired to say,

There is a God whom nature must obey.

Nothing so small but tells us He is great,

In its construction, aim, and changing state;

Nor yet so great, but humbly shall confess,

His lordly sovereign'ty and strong impress;

Nothing so low, but leads us to behold

A God on high, and majesty unfold;

Nothing so high, but condescends to teach,

And bring this truth within a mortal's reach.

Ask now, and ye shall each a God discern.

What made the earth round its own axis turn?

Thus rendering day and night alternate, sure,
The one for work, the other sleep secure.
And whilst thus daily playing, yearly fly
Around the sun, to bring each season nigh?
Nor ever ling'ring to recover force,
Nor ever varying in its hurried course.
Did but that orb in other fixture lie,
Men scorched or shivered, would in torment die.
Good and impartial, whilst he cheers and warms,
And cherishes the south within his arms,
All duteous Cynthia on the north attends,
And her assistance there to nature lends;
Chases the darkness that might else prevail,
And then the Southern, when her lord shall fail.
Thus, in one strain the earth and heavens declare
God's glory, love, and providential care.

Why is earth's outward robe the liquid air,
Affording life in which all living share,
Transmitting, by its undulations, sound,
Supporting clouds to cool the thirsty ground,
And by its fine transparency, convey
The light of heaven, to children of the day?
Look at the animated crowds that swarm,
Their wondrous preservation from all harm,
The ever new productions, to repair
The loss with increase, each returning year;
So well proportioned by the nicest art,
As never known to vary long apart.
Who would such wondrous ordinance fulfil?
No power of man, no mathematic skill!
Oh what a miracle is breathing clay!
Oh what is life, can life or wisdom say?

And tell what wondrous adaptation, found
In all on earth, in air, or ocean's ground;
The fins of fishes, wings of birds that fly,
The beasts that graze, then on the meadows lie:
How each a livelihood gains from day to day,
What varied, curious instincts all display;
No waste does nature, provident, admit;
Each element is filled, all beings fit
To live and gambol in their place and sphere,
More thifty none; the fragments disappear,
But are not lost; and thus in each new round,
A God, a God of Providence, is found.
And as fair nature travels to rehearse,
From year to year, her lectures in smooth verse,
Of wise contrivance, provident design,
What glorious truths are writ in every line.

When from earth's tyrant, threatening to destroy,
Gay spring escapes, and leaps with new-born joy,
The womb of earth brings forth her verdant store,
To feast the senses, and to promise more.
The snow-drop, violet, primrose, with their train,
Each in his turn breaks from the ground again,
And then the Convallaria in the shade,
Which its large leaves for its green bells have made,
Hiding with modesty its lovely bloom,
Like man immured within a convent's gloom;
Whilst the proud Crocus rears its dappled head,
Cultured within the garden's stately bed;
And Daisies, Pansies, and Ficaries gay,
Embroider fields in dazzling bright array.
The song is called for, and the air resounds,
To greet the enchanter with sweet thrilling sounds,

Who, waving over all her perfumed wings,
Her sun-dyed garments round her children flings.
And then when Spring retires, and Summer's ray
With charms and golden tresses gilds the day;
Roses of every hue adorn the ground,
And flowers and fruits each cultured spot surround,
When every bower its votive chaplet wreathes,
And peace, and love, and joy, all nature breathes;
When the world's comforter, the golden Sun,
Hath yoked his steeds, his glorious race to run.
Amid the scattered gems of orient dye,
When morn her kirtle shapes along the sky;
And when in full meridian pomp of dress,
All nature, laughing, doth his power confess;
Or setting in majestic sovereign state,
Her last beams linger, twilight to create;

Thus giving man fair nature to parade,
To eye and muse in brightness and in shade.
Say,—as these glories swim before the eye,
And each with each seems laboring to outvie,
Whilst every new-born animated tribe
Does nature's beauties increase and imbibe,—
Is there not stamped throughout the glorious whole,
Wisdom's contrivances, and love's control?

Ah man! earth's sin-born and polluted child,
By what black epithets shalt thou be styl'd?
Whilst God in glory shines in every ray,
Thou wilt not read, much less thy homage pay.
Canst thou look down, nor see Him in each sod,
Look up on high, yet not so high as God;
Hear His melodious praises tuned around,
Yet deaf remain, or catch but discord's sound.

The birds reprove thee in their grateful song,
The beasts are wiser, and each living throng
Condemn thy sin, as each through all its days
Receives His care and echoes back His praise,
Makes Nature's old Cathedral sweetly ring
With one continued chorus to their King.
The zephyrs that with amorous music play,
With glittering sunbeams swept from heaven away,
Gathering, like murmuring bees, from every flower,
Sweet nectar to regale the ambrosial bower;
Whilst all that move, with vigorous lungs inhale
The health and gladness floating in the gale,
As round their forms in curling wreaths they fan,
They whisper censure *of* and *to* base man.
And does not stern and dreary winter show,
When cold rain beats, and angry tempests blow,

The rich provisions of a hand unseen,
Which thus prepares for Spring's bright vernal green?
Bleak Russia's fens and Greenland's shrivelled race,
Can ne'er His kindly guardianship efface;
But tells us that there is a God who cares,
And food and clothing suitable prepares.
Although fair nature then seems stript and torn,
The hedges bare, the trees of foliage shorn,
The tuneful tribes struck dumb, the cattle grave,
And ice, like morsels, the creation lave;
She does but life and vegetation aid;
For while the snow defends the tender blade,
It nourishes its growth, a covering warm
Matures the precious grain it shields from harm.
The piercing cold is good; the blast that chills,
Destroys the damp, and seeds infectious kills.

Although all nature seems aloud to weep,
It is but the repose of needful sleep;
A pause in which new energy she gains,
That with new riches she might clothe our plains.

But does each object that can meet the eye,—
Lies on earth's surface, or mounts up on high,—
Each flower that blooms, each fruit that freely gives
The daily sustenance by which man lives,
A God, and His preserving aid, proclaim,
In its creation, and its useful aim,
His wondrous power and scientific skill,
Which know no limits, and is never still?
And shall not man, the lord of all so rare,
Creation's wise and mighty God declare?
Examine but his outward frame and form;
What wonders in their mechanism swarm;

Parts without number so minute and small,
Yet each alike dependant upon all;
If placed elsewhere, or needless deemed and spared,
All others would be injured or impaired.
Its moves and acts and varied functions view,
Complex, distinct, yet how connected too;
You need not the whole structure to descry,
Examine but the heart, the lungs, the eye.
Then from anatomy to medicine turn,
The tendencies to preservation learn;
How soon each part disease and danger feel,
And yet how ready of itself to heal;
Just like some loving, tender, jealous friend,
The first to feel, the first a slight to mend.
But look within, at the more wondrous soul,
Moving, directing, governing the whole;

What its vast varied powers can comprehend,
How stoop to little, or to great ascend;
The mighty progress and achievements made
O'er nature's realms, in prostrate service laid.
Think of its motions, with what speed they range
Throughout the world, in vast and endless change;
How they can woo or spurn, contract or swell,
Soar to high heaven, or sink to lowest hell.
If man is man, then surely God is God;
If man fears man, how shrink before His nod!

Conscience, what art thou, but a judge to say,
There is a God whom all should love, obey,
Heaven's throne and faithful advocate within,
To testify of innocence and sin.
And what is praise or blame, or virtue, vice?
Severed from Him, they have no power or price.

His law, though blotted, written on the heart,
Does all the different shades to each impart.
In mercy dress'd, or terror's wild array,
Conscience can charm all bliss or pain away.
What fears, alarms, will rack the culprit's heart,
How gladly would he from himself depart;
What forms of horror round his pathway fly,
What yells, and groans, and imprecations cry;
How sleepless spectres guard the murderer's bed,
For fear he sleep, cry blood for blood that's shed.
Nor need we thus to monstrous crimes refer,
Whene'er the debt and burden we incur,
How restless and afraid, although we hide
Our sins from all, lest some dark ill betide.
Though drugged and cooled, how will its dark waves boil,
From winter's torpid state, how hiss, uncoil;

More venomous, unruly, deadly, grown,
The longer sleep's oblivion it has known.
Oh! is not this the thunder of a God,
Which cries, beware, lest you provoke my rod?
A God who sees, hears, ever knows us all,
The first to move in what does each befal.
But oh! the virtuous breast, how calm, serene!
How softest sunshine lights and warms the scene!
Peace 'mid fierce wars, all harmony in strife;
Joy amid woes, in death the spring of life.
Does not each act of virtue God confess,
A present God, the virtuous to caress;
To guide, protect, and heavenly smiles impart,
Within, without, the God-reposing heart?
And when grief rages, or stern dangers rise,
The thought of man to God instinctive flies;

Or when injustice and oppression reign,
Nor help nor hope from aught below remain;
And when unequal fortune slaves the right,
We think of one whose justice will requite.
Men, scarcely men, of savage barbarous mind,
Guided by Thee a God explore and find.
No nation is so rude, no tribe so small,
But 'fore some God, in prayer or praise they fall.
Although they worship aught but Him on high,
Scour the wide forest, and ransack the sky,
To find new Deities; yet who shall say
Of those misguided fancy leads astray,
Because they have so many they deny
A power divine, a God in all defy.
And vile idolatry, with all its train,
Its hideous ceremonies, and rites insane;

And superstition, with its foul-mouthed crew,
Just as all counterfeit the real and true;
Ah would the passion with an equal force
Could higher fly and take a nobler course!

Tis true, that solitary fools have dared
To contradict what nature's voice declared,
Yet never nations, only unit men,
Atheist philosophers, with trembling pen;
And their opinions, like their heart would shake,
They e'en invoke the God those hearts forsake.
Thus whilst the ocean raged, weak Volney cried
Upon that God whose being he'd oft deride.
And learned Hobbes, more fearful than the child
Whose tender thought shoots forth in fancies wild,
Could never in the dark alone abide,
But his poor coward soul grew horrified;

Emblem of all who from Heaven's God depart,
Atheists in creed, in action, or in heart;
Their lives how vile, and as they reach the tomb,
Each ray departs in one terrific gloom.

But if we 'd learn the source whence all things came,
Consider well their being's end and aim,
As we commence and close our brief career,
Point we no higher than this humble sphere?
Man's willing slaves enjoying rest and food,
Fulfil their end and taste their sovereign good;
But not so he;—not all that earth can give,
The richest dainties on which princes live,
The luxuries of sense, the pomp of art,
With all that science, fancy, can impart;
The world's still new and inexhausted stores,
All that the eye, or swifter thought explores;

Reason, imagination, with their train,
Scorning the sensualist, the worldling's gain,
Skimming the ether fields of halcyon day,
Until new worlds of beauty they display;
Affections' holiest wreath, domestic ties,
Where hearts endeared secure earth's noblest prize;
Not love and friendship with fair fortune twin'd,
When woman's form and grace bewitch the mind,
And in her yielding arms the youth declares,
More than the joys of Paradise he shares,
Which angels envy, but which nought can give
But her sweet smile with whom alone he'd live.
Nor passions when on some soft couch they rest,
Or burning, revel in what charms them best,
All, all shall find, without religion's smile,
Something to darken, to disturb, defile;

That to taste bliss with undisturbed repose,

To pluck the fair and thornless blushing rose,

Our feet must tread on heaven's perennial sod,

And enjoy God in all, and all in God.

Drink where we will, 'tis brine, we thirstier grow,

The more we have, the larger wants we know.

The poor grows rich, the ignoble honors gain,

Rank, wealth and wisdom join to swell the train,

But ah, how soon, how bitterly confessed,

With Israel's King, who more than all possessed,

That nought but care and trouble they have won,

That all is vanity beneath the Sun.

A vacuum still, on misery we feed,

Until from God our happiness proceed.

All things but by participation live;

Nought has not what some other does not give;

Motion is moved, some spark must kindle fire,
Mind comes from mind, the highest from the higher;
Thus all things must be traced to one Most High,
The great original and sole supply;
Who unlike all above, around, below,
Can never such participation know.
'Tis ever thus with man's immortal soul,
Which must receive what else it cannot hold,
And God thus writing vanity on all,
Doth to Himself His guilty creatures call;
He gives them little that they may seek more,
Earth's bounties, that to Heaven their thoughts might soar.
All things are made with finite good to teem,
To guide man to the Infinite Supreme,
And he is urged in vain his powers to try,
In all things else, that he to God might fly.

For like those yonder planetary lights
Owe to the sun their beams and rapid flights,
Receive but as He pleases to divide,
Nor in their brightest satellites confide,
Which give no heat, whilst all their boasted light
Is but the radiance borrowed from His sight.
Thus man's desires and longings point on high,
To one enthroned beyond vain mortal's eye;
All joined to Him their summit, base, and end,
From whom all come, to whom all creatures tend,
Who only live in peace, preserved from harm,
As hung suspended on their Father's arm.
Yes! e'er man's mortal race began to run,
Nature and Providence in Him were one.
Let us but lend th' attentive ear and eye,
We meet but this in air, on earth and sky;

What'er their station in the mighty race,
The lines of consanguinity we trace;
All sing in one loud and melodious strain,
Of one who does throughout all nature reign.
All shout to man in one o'erwhelming voice,—
I am thy God, in me alone rejoice!
Yes, as I thus the universe explore,
From small to great, my God I still adore;
As dazzled from heaven's archway's gorgeous orbs,
I grovel here, and earth my mind absorbs,
This thought and feeling in my bosom swell,
Midst vernal bloom and autumn's golden spell;
When nature in her hidden mines conceals
The hand of God, or when its bounty yields.
And whilst I see radiant in fellow-man,
The style and beauty of the finished plan,

His form, proportions, voice, and wondrous mind,
His earnest throbbings the divine to find.
In nature's every move and work I trace,
As atoms fly, worlds rush through empty space,
Earth's meanest offering and her grandest prize,
Her grassy swards, and heaven's cerulean skies ;
Where'er I gaze, what'er I think, I see,
Deep-seated scheme, design and destiny.
And though my heart might 'gainst this truth rebel,
And dare a God so holy to repel,
Erase what gives the only charm to all,
And robe the universe in one black pall ;
Yet let there linger but one thought that's grand,
Let reason, conscience speak, aghast I stand ;
And whilst their glorious Author there discern,
The Atheist's maniac wickedness I spurn,

Until a surer faith assists the sight,
The soul seems quivering for some lofty flight,—
Sublimely soars on warm devotion's wings,
And o'er all nature thoughts of homage flings,
Then tired of all beside, to heaven she flies,
And speechless 'fore the eternal Godhead lies.

Say, Atheist! if, the wind's despotic wing,
Thy feet to some strange foreign land shall bring,
Where nought but birds and beasts to sight come near,
Shouldst thou espy 'midst all that's wild and drear,
Some noble palace, or fine work of art,
Rearing its head, would not this feeling start?
By what thou in that hallowed spot hadst seen,
That reasoning man upon that isle had been;
Since chance and instinct never once could raise
What reason only could attempt or praise.

Or else suppose, on mountain's summit found,
And as thou gazest, thoughtful, all around,
Thou seest drawn up in admirable array,
An army, bright and perfect as the day;
In discipline consummate, myriads stand,
Whom officers subordinate command,
All moving, marching in one regular pace,
All serving with alacrity and grace,
As all their faces towards one place are bent,
Each in subordination and consent;
Wouldst thou not then, at once infer and say,
There must be one supreme whom all obey?
They follow but as some chief captain leads,
Their union from one central power proceeds.

And when in olden day swift heralds flew,
To pave and prove the path which monarchs knew;

When o'er untrodden tracks the eye discerned
Mounts levell'd, marshes drained, and rivers turned,
And through the desert a highway prepared,
Need then another herald have declared,
As man and nature, prompt at duty's word,
The voice of majesty obedient heard,
That all proceeded from his high behest,
Who set all things in motion or at rest;
Thus does the world, the universe declare,
A present Deity still working there,
First, last, the Lord of lords, the King of kings,
Struck by whose hand her notes creation sings,
Whose swift and mighty chariot wheels you trace
Throughout each wide domain of boundless space;
All are but heralds, forced or charmed, His fame
Through endless being to chant, and thus proclaim

All things are His, lie prostrate at His nod,
Be wise, be still, and know that I am God.

There is a God, and if a God there be,
There is a Providence in all we see.
All that shall prove a God, shall also prove
One who in all does live, and think, and move;
To whom there's nothing little, nothing grand,
Too small or vast t' obey His plastic hand.
Creation without Providence must run
To frightful chaos, and all be undone.
In what does Providence but this consist,
Creation which was and does still exist?
And is this Providence but nature's laws?
A power impressed at first by the First Cause.
Does all revolve like some fine piece of art,
Which from its regulation dares not start,

And inobservant, on creation's throne,
Does nature think, converse, and act alone?
As in procession, solemn and sublime,
In silent awe, as from the dawn of time,
All move harmonious to one glorious end,
Does Deity refuse to superintend?
Shall infinite resources dormant lie,
And drowsy trinklings lull the Omniscient eye?
Vast power but impotence? vast mind remain
As vacant folly, nor speak wisdom's strain?
Too great, too elevated on His seat,
To think of aught that's finite 'neath His feet,
Shall He the work of the Creator chose,
And then all interest in creation lose?
Powers grand, complete, and complicate, bestow,
Nor yet be curious how they wrought to know?

Adjust a system so stupendous, good,
Nor ever see how fair and strong it stood?
The world have peopled with a thinking race,
Taught them in nature to behold His face,
Spread all around the trophies of His fame,
The fond memorials of a Father's name,
And they on some wild desert isle be left,
Like helpless orphans by cruel death bereft,
On the vast ocean of wide lawless space,
To struggle through their solitary race,
Nor one slight token of His care obtain,
Who only could a parent's heart sustain?
Suppose them for His sovereign pleasure formed,
And as He spoke them into being charmed,
Would not the eye complacent linger still,
And His own portrait view with rapture's thrill?

Must such a feeling in th' Eternal breast,

Once felt exhausted, then for ever rest?

Suppose them formed His glory to fulfil;

Blazon His power, His wisdom, and His skill,

Would not His glory equally be seen,

As Providence presided o'er the scene,?

Or did benevolence the Deity urge,

When from Himself the whole did first emerge;

The gushings forth of a parental heart,

Rejoicing most, rejoicing to impart;

That felt His glory was promoted best

When by the gladdened, grateful heart confest.

To earthly parents I would here appeal,

To that fond interest which they ever feel,

Not only in their birth, when first the glance

Lights on the love-pledge with new joyous trance,

But in their fortunes, growth, their progress, end,
When they no more at home on them depend,
As when first feeding on the mother's breast,
Or in the father's arms were lulled to rest;
Growing with their improvement and their years,
When the once helpless, no more succour shares.
And shall such promptings in the creature swell,
And yet not in the great Creator dwell?
If ye, being evil, still rejoice to give,
And in their smile and welfare live to live,
Shall the great God and Parent of mankind
No pleasure in His earth-reared children find?
No education on those minds bestow,
Which to Himself their varied treasures owe;
Yea, leave them to be born, to grow and die,
He knows not how, He cares not when, or why?

Tell me the architect that would achieve
Some monument of art forthwith to leave,
To fall into contempt, neglect, decay,
Which might his wondrous workmanship display.
And has heaven's Mechanician thus resigned
What once employed His mighty arm and mind;
Abandoned this vast system to the fate
Which unborn, untold ages might create?
A universe constructed with such skill,
That might Himself with boundless rapture fill,
Left to the revolutions of wild chance,
No more controlled by His fond guardian glance;
Who can alone where it does now remain,
In parts innumerable its place sustain;
Its complicated moves and wants explore,
Seeming irregularities restore,

Guide and impel it to that glorious end,
To which it should and will for ever tend.

In spite of subtilty, in spite of wit,
That faith I hold, which I will never quit;
Never, while life and gratitude remain,
Impair'd by sickness or oppress'd by pain.
With sounding words let sophists strike me mute,
Me they may silence, but can not refute;
Their taunts, O Providence! I'll learn to bear,
And own Thy present, Thy peculiar care.
Thou from the first hast cheer'd me on my way,
By night hast watch'd me, watch'd me through the day;
My cradled infancy, my childish state,
My giddy youth, and manhood more sedate.
Tho' mine to serve Thee, still 'tis mine to crave
Thy aid on earth, Thy love beyond the grave;

To beg protection with a heart sincere,

When woes are distant, or when woes are near;

Heedless of all, who call me wrong in this,

I think it duty, and I feel it bliss.

Thus let me, O my God, employ my days,

Till trust and prayer shall close this scene, in praise;

When after battles oft the prize is won,

Glory shall crown what grace has thus begun!

END OF CANTO I.

CANTO II.

* * * "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" JOB xi, 7.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God?" PSALM xc, 2.

ANALYSIS OF CANTO II.

The second Canto opens by shewing the importance of obtaining right views of God, being necessary in order to understand His providence—Mysteries inseparably associated with the nature and attributes of Deity—But though God may be incomprehensible, this no reason why we should not "find Him out," so far as He has revealed Himself.—Eternity the great and distinguishing attribute of Jehovah.—Endeavour by aid of comparison to raise our thoughts to the sublimity of God's past eternity. All the works and acts of Providence traced to that past eternity—Particularization, first in reference to the Author, and secondly of christians in general, including both general and particular providence—Practical reflections—The absurdity of attempting to fix times and seasons, or to alter the eternal arrangements of an all-wise and all-powerful Providence—The infinite power, wisdom, benevolence, and other attributes of God, considered in reference to individual christians and the church —Necessity of forming right views of God and his providence—Consolatory nature of the doctrine.

CANTO II.

GREAT God! ere we Thy Providence survey,
And through its wonders wind our arduous way,
Humble, o'ercome with awe, yet not afraid,
To muse whate'er Thou hast before us laid.
For terror, which to heaven its eye ne'er lifts,
Denies Thee, like presumption, and Thy gifts.
Our richest thoughts should to Thyself ascend,
And far as finite mortals, comprehend,
Search, though we never can search out Thy name,
Since what Thou dost must ever be the same
As what Thou art; our only warrant, guide,
To lead to Thee, and in Thee to confide.
Thus every mystery in Thy ways we trace,
Faith will resolve, reposing in its place,

Assured that what it cannot understand,
Moving or stationary, at Thy command;
Is equally the object of that care,
Which does all wise and good for all prepare.

True, that the finite, never, though it tries,
Can to th' aspiring infinite arise;
Though man, absurd and impious, since the fall,
Would be a god that knows or would know all;
Still mysteries shall engirt him as the air,
Thy works, Thyself, more wonderful declare,
The mystery of mysteries sublime,
As vast eternity encloses time;
New faculties and thoughts archangels gain,
But still these mysteries, mysteries still remain.
But let not weakness, in despair, assume
[illegible]sceptic's creed, and dress all truth in gloom.

Finite to higher finite still can rise,

Tho' like heaven's bird, it never touch the skies.

In mightiest streams, where'er their courses wind,

Shallows as well as plumbless depths we find;

Inviting spots where youngest feet might wade,

As well as those sage prudence would evade;

And whilst we hope new living streams to gain,

Pure salutary supplies with joy obtain,

Both where the one presents an open bed,

Or where the other seems to have none spread.

Nature may teach wise lessons, how much more

That blessed word which all the wise explore;

Though many myst'ries yet remain untold,

All that is needful we may there behold.

Presumption lies abashed, and reason's pride

Dares no more in itself or that confide,

Till grateful for its brilliancy, we own
That there thou mayest, that there thou shoudst be known.

To learn Thy Providence, adore its power,
To feel its influence hallowing every hour,
Our thoughts and feelings should be close enshrin'd
Within those temples where Thyself we find;
Live as encircled by that heavenly light,
In which Thy glorious attributes shine bright,
Till like the earth surrounded by the air,
Where'er we breathe we feel that Thou are there.
For what is Providence but God, the word
Of Him who makes His mighty voice thus heard?
Speaking to all, if all would lend an ear,
In accents whispering confidence or fear.

Thus would we round our chosen theme entwine
[illegible] thoughts of God which wisdom can combine;

Prepared each line of glory to receive,
Which each transmission from its truths shall leave,
But to restore, like some embowered lake,
Reflects in images that never break,
The rich and charming landscape to the eye,
That it has borrowed from the earth or sky.

And first, let time thy eager thought engage,
How long a day, a month, a year, an age;
Compute, in thought, a century not yet run,
Then all the centuries past since time begun.
Though tired, as ages mightier still, recede,
That did creation's glorious work precede;
And as thy farthest calculations fail,
And thought grows flushed, and then turns livid, pale,
With breathless awe behold Him on His throne,
All Self-existence, Majesty, Alone;—

Necessitated of Himself to be,
Cause and coeval of eternity.
On no external power could He depend;
Without beginning, middle, and 'out end.
Although His bounty life might cease to give,
All creatures die, yet God, still God must live.
Let Gabriel vainly strive, in hopes to find
Some dawn or morn in the Eternal Mind,
And as new ages without number rise,
Millions on millions, it but further flies.
Impossible that Heaven's sun e'er should set,
As that He ever rose from darkness yet.
Could He His own destruction e'er desire,
And hate the bliss which did Himself inspire?
Is there without aught to control or prey,
Or aught within to introduce decay?

So plain this truth to reason's naked eye,
That pagan nations would not pass it by;
And by their circles, and their temples round,
Did fancy picture truths that reason found?

Is God eternal! then ere mortal man,
Or blest immortals, their career began;
When all was silent, more than yonder grave,
Nor reason, thought, nor passion, good could crave;
Ere echo from her ancient, lonely bound,
Made far and near, her clear, shrill voice resound;
Ere chaos earth its future fate could tell,
Ere angels praised in heaven or cursed in hell;
Then did the great, unfathomed God foresee
All that has been, all that shall ever be.
His Providence eternal as His name;
Past, present, future, all to Him the same.

Then did He hear, and see, and feel, and stir,
Each sight and voice, each move, nor ever err;
Counted each tree, each leaf that should shoot forth,
The moment of its fall, as of its birth;
Each drop in showers that drizzle or that pour,
Each wave that foamed, or gently kissed each shore;
Each of the million changes that take place,
As centuries roll in earth's prolific race;
Each move, each look, each instinct, passion, thought,
Of tribes more numerous than to Adam brought:
Each one that studies the history of man,
Whatever has been, or whatever can.
Then were my frames, as in my mother's womb,
All known to Him the form they should assume;
My parents, health and sickness, life and death,
[illegible] would leave me, whom I should leave beneath.

My visit to that rural, happy vale,

Where the fond eye entranced, first learnt to hail

The loveliness and witcheries of that fair,

Who 'gainst my will, from me my heart would tear;

Next to my God, my honor, joy, my all,

Whose smile alone can cheer, or frown appal.

O, may we, blest, still linger side by side,

'Till death, considerate, both at once divide;

Nor yet divide, but in one chariot bear

To higher loves and joys that angels share!

Each little trifling care forbidding rest;

Each joy the heart has felt but ne'er confest;

Each tempter's wile to keep me from heaven's goal,

The tripple foe that seeks to damn the soul,

He knew, and felt, and watched, and moved, and spared,

And for each future day each past prepared;

Each note of praise that grateful lips have sung;
Each prayer that faltered on a trembling tongue;
Each wish unbreathed the heart has left on high,
As well as the long, loud, impassioned cry;
Then did He know the fate of each request,
Whether to give or to withhold were best;
Yet never to withhold because He would,
If that were bad, communicate some good,
That prayer and praise should never once ascend,
But what some chosen blessing should descend.
How prayer and providence would all agree;
How long each chain in the great chain should be;
How link in link should hold, how keep their place;
Firmness unite with fitness, beauty, grace;
The little and the grand together rise,
As though but one, o'erwhelming with surprise;

How in the history of the human race,
Adversity prosperity should chase;
How some should stand erect, whilst others sink
Along life's winding and uncertain brink;
Make and unmake, each by their rise and fall,
As day and night alternate on earth's ball.
Yes! did not then Jehovah thus foresee,
All that has been, and that shall ever be;
Had aught escaped Him in th' eternal train,
His other knowledge must have proved but vain.
Th' Omniscient God, eternal then no more,
Would cherubim and seraphim adore;
All must soon cease to tremble at His nod,
Nor infinite perfection reign in God.
What, then, is Providence, but the design,
Latent, eternal, in the breast Divine:

Th' Eternal choice, permission, and foresight,
Of Him who does all things, and all things right;—
Predestination with foreknowledge twin'd,
Yet each distinct in the Eternal mind.
As ever pondering, the bless'd One in Three,
Hell His foreknowledge, but Heaven His decree.
Perish the blasphemy which says that sin
Did with the spotless Infinite begin;
Oh, horrid thought! how horrid tongue can't tell;
The vilest imprecation framed in hell.
The revelation of Himself and will,
That might eternity with rapture fill;
Creation, then formation, with its train,
All that is past, all that doth yet remain.
His own biography,—which yet conceals,
In each and all, far more than it reveals;

Dark symbols of Himself, e'en when most bright,
When oft explored by angel's piercing sight;
Not for Himself, presiding at heaven's helm,
But for creation's densely peopled realm:
And not on earth alone, but through the skies,
In regions where e'en fancy never flies;
In countless worlds, and complicated scenes,
And endless ranks of wise and happy beings:
Each prototype as clear, as good, sublime,
From His eternity as wrought in time.
Is God Eternal! let not mortal man,
Whose views of life are bounded by a span,
Presume the times and seasons best to know,
Nor think His promise or His threat'ning slow;
Nor hope the least reverse, the firm decree
Followed and formed from God's eternity;

Which in succession, endless, in the race

Of countless orders and events, takes place.

Can time, when measuring time, be just and wise,

As He who all eternity descries?

Wanton impatience! cease to ask, "how long,"

As though His time, from whom time sprung, were wrong.

Vain mortal! dare not Providence reprove,

However slow, circuitous its move;

Do not at this, in Providence repine,

Its working so long seen 'fore its design;

Midst maze and darkness, nought that's sure portend,

So many acts before you learn the end;

Let creatures of a day make haste and hie,

With all the speed that littleness can fly,

God has a life too long, and too sublime,

To be thus hurried for the want of time;

Day without dawn or decline, to fulfil
All the wise counsel of His sovereign will.
As in the move mysterious comets make,
However wide the compass they may take;
All, all is law, and must come right at last,
When the bright future lightens the dark past.
Nor yet in complex matter, but in mind,
The same laws all its operations bind;
A truth which reason certifies as sure,
That He whose rule o'er nature is secure,
Who o'er th' inanimate holds perpetual sway,
Each mental act must equally obey;
Since both perpetually together blend,
And on each other's influence depend,
And He who can the external world control,
Must, if He will, the mental also mould;

Each passion, move, and look, of brute or man,
As rigidly a sequence in the plan;
The bird with equal certainty convey
The seed where destiny shall point the way,
As if left to the wind. The hoof shall tread
The grain for which God shall reserve no bed,
As though He did for it a blight prepare,
By aqueous particles that float the air;
And man with all his obstinate free-will,
Shall his Creator's great design fulfil,
And whether with or 'gainst his God combin'd
Rebelling 'gainst His will, or else resign'd,
Shall equally promote what He decreed,
Alike His instrument to mould and lead,
Quite as precise as water, air, or fire,
Accomplish all His counsel and desire.

And as throughout the whole of human tale,
Not smallest predertemined link can fail;
So shall the greatest from the meanest rise,
As mighty dryas in the acorn lies;
Wondrous concatenation to declare
That man to God should raise his thought and prayer;
A word, a look, a thought, so trifling small,
That no one else would ever once recal,
May generate an influence far more wide
Than continents, which shall through centuries glide.

As in an orrery of human art,
The forces that produce and rule each part,
The wise, exact inventor's hand provides,
His mind predicting what its fate decides.
Thus in the universe of matter, mind,
Through our eternity from that behind;

Were all its facts, fortuities decreed
By Him from whom its properties proceed.
All unity, He knows not time nor space,
Countless variety, nor remote place,
Can Him the least bewilder or obscure,
Render the forethought or the act less sure.

We need not scan the heavens, where'er we glance,
Nought moves at random, or exists by chance;
Although we can't predict, nor yet explain,
Like an eclipse, th' approaching storm or rain,
Yet ev'ry fluctuation owns a guide,
Unfailing ordination must decide.
Each forming cloud, each fitful breeze, each shower,
Each particle of dust, their course and power;
The downy seed which some impelling tide,
Or the capricious weather chose to guide,

In softest bank or hardest rock inclose,
With the developement in which it grows;
Alike compliant follows His command,
Who holdeth mighty oceans in His hand;
Who in His providence prepares its bed,
Then plants and waters, and lifts up its head.

The sway of littles none but He can tell,
To whom nought's little that e'er man befell;
Break but the smallest link, we wrest the chain
Which Heaven's Supreme would never once regain.
Disjoin Him from one particle of soil,
And of its God creation we despoil.

Let this be true, and we are forced to own
That all God's attributes are here made known:
His power must realize whate'er He please,
Swifter than thought, and with most perfect ease;

Evil He, and He only, cannot do;

He cannot thwart what's wise, just, good, or true,

But all excepting that which would defame

The infinite perfection of His name;

All that His wisdom, holiness, inspire,

The boundless good His goodness can desire;

All that is fit and proper to be done,

He has or will do for and by His Son;

Dishonour not the greatness of His power

Who is thy shield, thy fortress, and thy tower.

Evils in every complicated form,

Billow on billow, storm on furious storm,

His simple fiat can like moths destroy,

Or make them ministers of life and joy.

Whatever opposition you shall meet,

Your iron shoes shall trample 'neath your feet,

And whilst the strongest youths shall faint and fall,
Let but the weakest on Jehovah call;
They shall mount up on high with soaring wing,
And there His praise in strains exulting sing,
Be carried through what might the mightiest scare,
As 'towering eagles cleave the yielding air.
Though awful upshots should increase each day,
Blank disappointments make your heart their prey;
Though poisonous slander by each viper tongue,
In endless changes 'gainst your name be rung;
Though ev'ry element that nature knows,
And the wide universe conspire as foes;
Still shall you walk and look as calm, serene,
As though all had good friends and fortune been,
And whilst the rich and mighty are forgot,
They who once spurned, shall envy your bright lot,

Then let the feeblest christian still pursue,
To God, to duty, and to conscience, true;
His Providence shall all things good ensure,
Whilst Christ each inward malady shall cure;
Though earth and hell rage with unceasing din,
His mighty arm can crush each power of sin;
Temptations, trials, hardships, all shall flee,
As He assists they'll more than conquerors be.
The work and toil of heroes shall be light,
Since Israel's God omnipotent shall fight;
Proud mountains levelled, humblest vales raised high,
Dense forests swept, and marshy pools made dry;
The waves divided, through the raging sea,
Their captive gloom exchanged for victor's glee.
Then let them choicest votive offerings bring,
And make heaven's arches with their praises ring;

And let Christ's church of every sect and name,
Zealous alone to spread His blood-earned fame,
Midst all the sad discouragements they know,
Rank blots and errors that around them grow;
When the once bright but flattering sky looks dark,
And holy Elis tremble for the ark;
Let them e'en then, whilst her strong pillars shake,
Trust in His providence, and courage take.
The ark of old, Philistines made a prey;
Not so th' all-guarded church of gospel day:
It cannot perish, linked to th' Eternal throne
Of Him who rules o'er all, and rules alone,
Deep rooted in the clefts of that Great Rock,
It'll stand secure and smile at each fierce shock;
Its glory shall evolve from each dark cloud
That threatened by eclipse its light to shroud.

Its satisfying bread, its healing leaves,
Shall bless each land that through its absence grieves;
The weapon of each foe shall but rebound,
And pierce his heart and strike him to the ground.
Th' Assyrian hordes that loud and impious roar,
Scattered as chaff on summer's threshing-floor;
The once bright crescent of the prophet fade,
Their locust armies fall beneath His blade;
Once sumptuous Babylon before Him driven,
And by truth's thunders her strong fortress riven.
Though small and feeble, God does still remain
The church's Tower, nor can her troops be slain.
The seed our fathers planted shall not die,
The groans of martyrs never reach the sky,
That pious eloquence which myriads led,
Those weeping prayers, though still, they are not dead.

However long the conflict may endure,
Its issues as heaven's oracles are sure,
Truth on the martyr's stake can conquer more
Than error on proud thrones that men adore;
Oft mightier when fierce persecution's child,
Than when the gold is on her altars pil'd;
When she beholds thick mantled o'er her shrines,
And in creation's rich embroideries shines.
The power of parliament ne'er gave her birth,
Nor can it crush, nor all the kings on earth.
Her's the companionship of Him on high;
Her fellowship the tenants of the sky.
The tempests that her branches to the heavens still toss,
Shall only howl their own funereal loss.
What truth than this more plain or yet more grand,
That all things lie quite passive in His hand.

As we the world, the universe explore,
There is not smallest spot but we adore
A God omnipotent, what then the whole,
This mighty ball of earth, from pole to pole.
The gorgeous sun, with all the starry train
Which in their azure sockets fixed remain,
So massy that no engine e'er could raise
And place them there, to speak His lofty praise;
But power magnificent which knows no bound,
Which our most grand imaginings confound.
But shall we to creation have recourse,
Doth not His providence with equal force,
The mind with this sublimity appal,
As God omnipotent we trace in all.
Of countless numbers, visit any sphere,
And millions of new miracles appear;

If not one atom of earth's wondrous frame,
But from the common womb of nothing came;
If all material, wondrous, nature shews,
Resources infinite from whence it rose;
Doth not His power seem equally immense
As He its preservation doth dispense?
Nor in the worlds of matter, but of mind,
The same almighty power and skill we find;
Events foretold, ages before they were,
An all-directing God of mind declare;
So complicated, yet minute and true,
They tell of One who decreed or foreknew.
Each mental soil its varied fruit unfolds,
But only as He gives, directs, withholds;
And that His purpose might all others rule,
He'll make the fool a sage, the sage a fool.

His enemies shall be their own worst foes,
Their toil for good, productive but of woes;
Through His advice and prompting, forced to choose
The worst of ills, and the best gifts refuse.
Then let the wicked fear Jehovah's frown;
The loftiest pride shall stagger and fall down;
The most secure in sin, shall surely know,
They are but stubble, when He doth but blow.
Princes but dust, and wisdom folly, vain,
And mightiest armies but small drivelling rain.
Let all men as they hear His thunders roar,
Th' Almighty God of Providence adore;
Obey His voice, for fear that voice compel
To earth's worst miseries or the doom of hell.
And let the weak, the halting, trembling saint,
Here learn to hush his fear and quell his plaint;

Whatever straits his future steps betide,
He has a God who can and will provide.
Each thing that dwells in air, earth, sky, and sea,
His unbelief shall chide and bid it flee.
Is he unable to protect, relieve,
When dangers threaten, or when troubles grieve?
The helpless weapons she calls forth to strife,
Shall be suspended on the tree of life;
Memorials of their impotence and rage,
That dared Heaven's child in conflict to engage;
And trophies of her victories and power,
Her high armorials, to time's latest hour.
But what avail is might, however great,
To guide at will the chariot-wheels of fate,
Unless its certain movements are combin'd
With an all-wise and all-sufficient mind?

'Tis not base strength alone that God would show,
Like brutish valour such as warriors know;
But ev'ry other attribute must be,
With His vast power in closest amity.
What dignity to each doth each impart,
What rapturous thought to the believing heart,
As God, the God of providence appears,
Thus only perfect, great beyond our fears.
How foolish are the wisest sons of lore,
Or those whom native genius teaches more;
They know not the best instruments to use,
Or if the fittest instruments they choose,
They serve but worst than those whom folly hands,
And whether pliant to their oft commands,
Or else refractory, in both it ends
Alike disastrous, or to nothing tends.

Let His wise providence thy thought engage,
As seen unfolded in the scripture page,
How friends and foes, how time and place combine,
How all unite to make its glories shine;
So perfect that you'd judge proud man to be
Without free-will, or aught of agency;
Yet man quite free, but only free to tread
Where an all-wise, all-mighty God has led.
Each purpose stands alike that God decrees,
With which man warmly quarrels or agrees!
Thus Isaac, full of trembling doubts, must bless
His younger son, although he loves him less;
He has but closed when Esau comes too late,
So sure, so wonderful, the train of fate.
Joseph is sold, and by their sordid gains,
God, equally with them, His end obtains;

Far worse than beasts their eye with envy gleams,
Their hatred rises at his om'nous dreams;
They mock at God as in the fields they cry,
Behold the dreamer, we'll his dreams belie!
But shall God's providence and promise fail,
Because earth's and hell's mighty powers assail?
Their opposition shall but speed the day,
And for its brighter splendour pave the way.
The very means that malice shall employ,
In certain hopes its victim to destroy,
Shall prove the wisest, noblest, that can bring
Honor to him, and honor to heaven's King.
Thus Saul's cruel ire a throne for David won,
As if his own hereditary son;
Thus every saint shall only higher rise,
Whilst each proud champion far more abject lies,

As earth and hell against his God conspire,
Unhurt amidst each blazing, martyr fire,
They do but light his lamp, they do but burn
Ashes to fill their own funereal urn;
Whilst he in more than emperor's state is left,
And they of every good and hope bereft.
Each act upon ten thousand acts depends,
And each to each its best assistance lends;
Myriad of myriads might immediate spring,
To frustrate or retard what Heaven would bring;
Myriads of myriads must conjointly rise,
Or else Heaven fails in what Heav'n never tries;
Means most condemned as most approved, the sway
Of an all-wise, all-powerful God obey.
Thus darkness seems converted into light,
Error in truth, and grossest wrong in right;

But let not man condemn, but only own
That God's too great and too wise to be known.

'Tis easy in a watch to learn and see
How each and all in concert must agree;
With all the exactness of mechanic force,
The wheels connected from one common source,
Must servile move where'er the artist please,
And that with perfect and unwavering ease.
But not so here; what thought can ever solve,
How many independent wheels should thus revolve?
In wonder lost, is here alone beheld
The harmony of Monads Leibnitz held;
What once an emperor vainly long essayed,
Is here achieved, all-perfect, without aid.
Ten thousand myriad independent minds,
Here each its centre of attraction finds;

Clocks without number at one moment strike,
All o'er the universe, not two alike.
Ye proud philosophers! where are ye now,
Can ye by your refinements tell us how?
Can your lines fathom, or your sail explore,
An ocean fathomless, and without shore?
Your wisdom is but folly 'mongst those deeps,
Your boldness but presumption, maniac leaps;
Ye idly waste your time, bewildering all,
Pursuing what you science falsely call.
Then learn of God the only wise to be,
Where God and creature never can agree;
But without which no creature can be wise,
However magnified in his own eyes,
Humility as large and as profound
As these vast depths and this untrodden ground.

All that He gives, believe, receive, obey,
But never dare to quit the realms of day.
And let the child of God still mark His face,
Adorned with all a father's love and grace,
Nor think of Him as powerful, just, or wise,
Whilst His benevolence forgotten lies.
His vast resources which no thought conceives,
Are surely thine, who on His Son believes.
Almighty to protect, to guide, defend,
And every blessing suitable to send;
Almighty but on death's car to oppose
And overwhelm each of His wretched foes;
All-wise the christian to secure from harm,
And heavenly good with heavenly grace to charm,
To make each evil good, each bitter sweet,
And frantic hell lie trembling at His feet.

Pollute and darken not, O man, thy thought,
By lik'ning Providence to what is wrought
By mortal man, whose every thought and way,
Are quite opposed to His as light to day.
Far higher, brighter, than heav'n's arch on high,
When summer's sun adorns the glittering sky,
Than this low, dark, and grovelling menial earth,
Where insects without number have their birth.
Far grander than those systems angels know,
Compared with airy bubbles children blow.
Submit to Him, thus to thyself thou'lt be
Justice, and wisdom, and felicity.
Let prayer ne'er cease, and never cease to pray
That God might have His own best will and sway.
Submit obedient, and thy God will give
Himself and all on which the soul can live.

Then lift with confidence, to God thy eye,
Let sullen unbelief disperse and fly;
Let a good Providence thy heart engage,
To calm each tempest and each grief assuage.
No earthly solace can compare with this,
No other hope afford perennial bliss;
All things that to thyself or man concur,
To God, the proper agent, still refer.
Of vast importance that we this receive,
And steadfastly and cordially believe,
That no event has been or e'er shall be,
Which Heaven did not provide or else foresee;
No agent operate that's uncontrol'd,
Since His firm grasp does all for ever hold;
That every thought, intent, and move, and will,
Throughout creation, does but His fulfil.

Where we can nothing for ourselves arrange,
Meet but vicissitude so sudden, strange;
Whilst troubles will the brightest joys pervade,
And when most confident be still afraid;
Who would not wish and seek to have recourse
To God, our only true stay and resource.
Thus trials and afflictions lose their sting,
Whilst joys and honors can no canker bring;
But brighter plumed, and richer dressed, afford
A transport not their own, blessed by their Lord.
Possessions when they come and when they go,
Seem good alike, since He who does bestow,
Is just as kind when He His gifts withdraws,—
His love and wisdom equally the cause
In Providence, as on our earthly ball
Of brilliant day, and night's gloom darkening all;

Afflictions but love-tokens of His care,

A father's answer to his child's full prayer.

This Providence all men are forced, indeed,

In things extraordinary oft to heed.

When Heav'n's fierce phials their fell vengeance pour,

Or when her bounty yields the hidden store

Of blessings unexpected, rich, and free,

Who but the atheist then a God must see?

But 'tis not thus with the true pious heart,

Which never dies or can from God depart.

Not e'en the smallest circumstance transpires,

In which the thought of Providence retires.

In health and sickness, safety and alarm,

Midst adverse scenes and fortune's brightest charm;

Like Job when full of all, or when bereft,

Nor riches, friends, nor health, nor children left;

In youth and age, in life and death the same,
A Providence their trust, a heav'n their aim.
Who, when th' idea of God was once but brought,
With such transcendant truths and glories fraught,
But would suppose it never once could roam,
But find in ev'ry heart a joyous home;
With each occurrence ever close entwined,
All other thoughts by this proved and refined.
But oh, alas! how rarely this the case,
The thought of God to every one gives place!
He, without whom we never once could give
A thought to one, in whom alone we live,
By whom they can alone to aught attend,
To Him one passing thought they scarce can send.
A thousand second'ry, inferior schemes,
Through neither one of which the Godhead gleams,

Shall men resort to that they might evade
The thought of Him who them and all things made;
As one incomprehensible, discard,
Or too remote to arrest their regard.
To account for what in providence they know,
They only look on what they see below;
Beyond, vain, wretched mortals never fly
To Him who's all-in-all, and ever nigh,
Who sits sublimely on th' eternal throne,
Unseen, supreme, and infinite, alone;
Guiding the vast and complicated whole,
To one great, ever-rising glorious goal;
His plans still climbing nobler and more grand,
As ages bound, and angels' thoughts expand,
Still larger stores in majesty to dress,
And the vast viewless universe to bless.

Great God! who has a right to reign but Thee,
O'er all that are and all that e'er shall be?
Thy sole prerogative, creation's Lord,
In providence revealed to be ador'd.
Who else but He that first imparted life,
Could save from foulest stain and endless strife?
The boisterous passions of mankind restrain,
Nor suffer aught to work or stir in vain?
Founded on the creation is that right,
And His superior wisdom, love, and might,
The infinite perfections of His name,
That excellence which all His works proclaim.
Shall earthly sovereigns hold unquestioned sway,
And shall not we the God of Heav'n obey?
Shall our frail earthly parents be revered,
And not our highest Heavenly Father feared?

They do but rule as He permission grants,
Whom when He pleases some new power supplants;
But He rules of Himself, and He alone,
Earth's only Father, Master, Judge, and Throne.
He never plans or flutters in the dark,
And His poised arrows never miss their mark;
He only can be qualified to reign,
And universal love and homage gain.
Did highest angel take one day His seat,
Ruin would rush in ev'ry form complete;
Justice be outraged, Satan proudly boast
Of victories gained o'er God's embattled host;
The voice of prayer, the cry of God's elect,
Urging Him to relieve, redress, protect,
Would from high heaven in mockery rebound,
As a forbidden or unmeaning sound;

Mercy and might would be alike abused,
The evil chosen and the good refused;
Whilst each of the rich, wide, material plains,
Would lose its life-blood, or else burst its veins.

Then grant, great God, since I can but oppose
That will, which mind as much as matter knows;
Since Thou art wise, and even in one scheme,
Hast ends more numerous than the wisest dream;
Each act a scene, each scene a complex plan,
Not half of which is known to ignorant man;
Teach me alone to those things to aspire,
Those blessings only to ask and desire,
That providence and prayer may ever be
The same to my last ling'ring day, to me;
By Providence alone each hope inspired,
Thy glory in each good alone desired.

All that I have and am regard as Thine,
Then all Thou art and hast shall too be mine;
Noble and infinite exchange to me,
Though nought of profit to a God like Thee.
Thus just to my own wants and my desert,
Desires shan't sting, whilst I alone assert,
In every purpose, act, and wish, and prayer,
What Thou shalt in thy providence declare;
Nought then will ruffle. But if this 's too great,
Reserved alone for heaven's serene, bright fate,
Oh let me, like the son of Jesse, grow
A weaned child, what I love best forego;
Each passion, effort, and each thought, constrain
To own and to exult in Thy blest reign;
Swell the angelic chorus with my voice,
And bid with me creation's realms rejoice.

May resignation with her placid smile,
On prayer's bright wing, each storm of grief beguile.
Her seraph-hand, her star of faith shall bless
The heart that else would only gloom confess;
The cypress change into the blooming rose,
The howling wind to zephyrs' soft repose.
Angel of peace! she'll raise the drooping head,
And make our comforts live though long since dead.
But if deceived, unveil this orb of sight,
With Saul to see the glorious gospel light.
If absent, bring within my barren heart,
That wisest wisdom, that best chosen part;
That I might love Thee and Thy laws obey,
Concerned to tread still in life's narrow way;
My soul sincerity, and faith my shield,
My life a tree which the best fruit shall yield.

Then shall each fear be folly, and each care
Be Thine alone, whilst every rising prayer,
Returns rich-freighted from my God above,
To prove that Thou art to Thy child but love.

END OF CANTO II.

CANTO III.

* * * "My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth." PSALM CXXXIX, 15.

"I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me." PSALM lvii, 2.

"There is one event to the righteous and the wicked." ECCLES. ix, 23.

ANALYSIS OF CANTO III.

THE Author's choice of subject.—God and virtue ever the most worthy theme of a poet's muse.—The different blessings and mercies of Providence severally enumerated, and gratefully celebrated.—The consideration of the divine goodness in Providence followed out both in reference to the Author and the general reader.—The peculiarly distinguished privilege of having pious parents, for this life, as for the next.—The preserving care of Providence both in temporals and spirituals.—Election the crowning mercy, without which, all others can never be truly styled blessings.—The different methods employed to effect the change of conversion.—The mysteries attending such considerations to be resolved alone by being resigned to a mysterious, but wise and good God.—Gratitude expressed for afflictions.—Comparison of adversity and prosperity:—the former shown to be more frequently the safest and best state.—The varied benefits resulting from affliction.—The sin and folly of estimating men's real condition, and still more so their real character, from a mere survey of their outward circumstances.—Prosperity injurious to the mere worldling, and often to the christian.—Irregularity of outward condition no argument against the wisdom and goodness of God.—Though conduct sometimes receives no suitable return, yet men most frequently eat of the fruit of their own doings, even in this life.—Without religion the worldling's prosperity, honor,

and joy, but superficial, precarious and transitory, deformed by madness and misery.—The duty of observing and studying the whole, rather than mere fragments of Providence.—All things work together for good to the christian, but none so much as afflictive events:—the reverse alone true of the worldling.—The sin and folly of impatience and presumption, and the wisdom, beauty, and happiness, of an entire, cordial, spirit of resignation.—The sanctifying influences, joyous reminiscences, glorious revelations, and delightful anticipations, of which a past, present, and future providence will be the subject and source, in a future state.—Conclusion.

CANTO III.

Others in soft harmonious strain, may sing
The praise of what proud vice and folly bring.
Not so, my lyre; she sweeps alone the strain
Of God's good Providence, and heaven's pure train;
She ambles here but to ascend the skies,
Where fair celestials vanities despise.
Thy matchless face, Thy passion-kindling ray,
From virtue's precepts often loves to stray;
But if obscure, and never rolled among
Nature's all soul-commanding sons of song,
I'll hold alone Thy glories up to view,
And through life's transient span thy paths pursue;
Then though I earn no wage of this world's fame,
When they have perished God shall own my name.

Awake! my muse, to celebrate His praise,
Whose love and bounty have crowned all thy days;
And join with me, all ye, with grateful lay,
Whom the past makes to praise, the future, pray;
See all His attributes in concord sweet,
In thee and love as in His own Christ meet.
First thy formation, and protection, there
Thy curious workmanship with wondrous care;
When made in secret He limned out thy form,
Exact and perfect, still preserved from harm.
Without those windows through which now you see,
The world had but a dungeon been to thee;
Thou mightest throughout life have been the same,
With both the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and lame.
Then from the house turn to the wondrous guest,
Who in its rich apartments takes its rest;

Does reason there illume, and fancy fire,
The universe explore, to God aspire;
Think of those beings from whom your heart recoils,
Who seem alone to be designed as coils;
The beauty of superior forms to teach,
And monitors of gratitude to preach.
Thou mightst have been the lowest, meanest thing
That crawls on earth, or spreads its airy wing.
Think of thyself, obscure, within the womb,
That threatened myriad times to be thy tomb,
Then a good Providence proceed to trace
In thy nativity, its time and place.
What mercy manifold if we are born
Just on the spot nature and art adorn;
Where law and liberty alike prevail,
Nor foes within nor foes without assail.

In Libyan groves, or 'mongst the Scythian hordes,
Or where the savage slays with wooden swords;
On Oonaliska's shore, where breezes sweep
Th' eternal snow, and to each other weep;
Where Nature stern, refuses man's embrace,
And wears a frowning and forbiding face;
Thou mightst have been a nursling of those climes,
Or else have lived in those dark troublous times,
When Britain was but death's devoted soil,
'Midst murderous gore from which we pale recoil;
Without a home or shelter to defend,
One moment's peace, one solitary friend;
Mongst men who, as brute beasts, together herd,
Or else where gen'rous nature has conferred
Bounties almost as large as England shares;
Thou mightst to demons offered up thy prayers,

Ne'er heard of Him with whom our hopes begin,
Felt the disease, but not the cure of sin;
Victim of priest-craft, superstition fell,
The christian's pity, and the prey of hell:
Or where the crescent its dark banner flings,
Or papist his abomination brings;
All the vile brood that cursed lands infest,
Thou mightst have drank from the maternal breast;
Or else thy mortal race have here begun
When the blest bible was unveiled to none.
Then count the millions that tread earthly ground,
Who ne'er such glorious privileges have found.
But oh, far higher boon, all words are cold
And passionless, such treasure to unfold;
If thou hast felt, as well as heard, the grace
Which only can renew our fallen race.

Millions in christian lands, shall only be
More deeply plunged in guilt and misery;
Since they have heard and known but to pass by,
That great salvation without which we die;
That second death whose horrors tongue can't tell,
Tortures which can be only known in hell.
Were you of wise and pious parents born,
And by their care from rude temptation torn?
Possessed of competence enough to give
All that we need for comfort whilst we live;
Did they by their example and their prayer,
Their wise discretion, discipline, and care,
Train you for honors, blessings, here below,
And for those raptures Heaven will soon bestow?
Season when dangers every path await,
And satan lures by his most tempting bait.

Oft the proclivity to ev'ry ill,
Hotbed to cherish the depraved self-will!
How many parents will almost compel
Their wretched offspring to the gates of hell;
Who'd rather follow them to their dark graves,
And see them ranked with profligates and knaves;
Who'd stifle ev'ry opening they behold,
Rather than have saints cast in heaven's pure mould;
Who, Herod-like, could they have their own will,
Would Christ within the tender cradle kill;
They strangle ev'ry principle of worth,
Train them to woe and infamy on earth,
And thus by their pernicious counsels, goad
Their blind besotted souls to hell's abode.
Others, who do not to such lengths proceed,
To the same course by their omissions lead.

Then bless, my soul, that Sovereign love and care,
Which did for thee a happier home prepare.
What numerous blessings oft both worlds attend,
Those who from pious Israel's sons descend;
By my experience, as His word, confest,
The habitation of the just is blest.
Ere nature's pangs did birth to me impart,
I was prevented by a praying heart;
Ere it was known what form I should assume,
Like Hannah's son, devoted from the womb.
And then when reason dawned and I could speak,
What numerous ways did love and wisdom seek!
As thought and feeling did to bud expand,
What energies sprang forth at love's command!
With palpitating heart, with streaming eyes,
Begged blessings for me from the listening skies.

Whilst in the lonely chamber, side by side,
A mother did my all to God confide,
Gave me to Him, in Him to live and die,
And meet her crowned beneath a happier sky.
Whilst the young, craving, curious mind she'd feed,
And on the heart impress a scripture creed,
Not such as blind, proud, furious bigots know,
But grafts from which true piety will grow,
And from my dawn to her last thinking hour,
To the same end exerted all her power;
Whilst a fond father's eye learnt to detect
Almost each latent evil and protect,
By the wise, virtuous, kind, and favoring rod,
And lead me on and upwards to his God.
But how much richer mercy, if thy foes,
The direst, cruellest, that the child e'er knows;

If Providence such foreign succours sent,
As their sad faults and folly to prevent;
Like those who long have tottered o'er the tomb,
Should be more grateful than those who, in bloom,
Have not like Israel's king by death been scared,
When like a resurrection, they are spared.

From childhood's vagaries and youth's gay career,
Still mark the course where Providence did steer;
How many mercies have been daily shown,
But how far more behind the scenes, unknown.
The springs and autumns of His bounteous hand,
Through you so oft would break each good command;
When e'en against His mercies you conspire,
Doubted His love, and His forbearance tired.
From dangers, ills, and deaths untold, preserved,
Restored how oft to wisdom whence you swerved.

When inexperience, and caprice, and sin,
Some murderous work or purpose did begin,
Some Abigail has crossed thy headlong path,
Or some new thought and move averted wrath,
Or conscience slumbering did just then awake,
Or else the Word did by its terrors shake.
Observe thy calling where thou earnst thy bread,
How Providence has thus disposed and lead;
How suited to thy genius, strength, and care,
What wisdom, and what goodness! But compare
Thyself with vagrants, or those idle men,
Whom fortune makes but an unsightly wen.
If lawful, honest, for the public weal,
Debtor to none, we may proud pleasure feel:
For though Augustus might think good to build
An Apragapolis with such men fill'd,

God's conduct, word, and providence declare,
Each ought to give, as well as each one share.
None can be innocent, or virtuous, wise,
Whose time like that of some vain insect flies;
And who when they shall fall amongst death's slain,
Shall not be missed, but prove a social gain.
Then let the christian here admire to learn,
Whose mind is often full of doubt, concern,
That God's kind providence will ne'er forsake
Those for whose good He's pledg'd to undertake.
Shall He for meanest creatures have a care;
Careless of those who come to Him in prayer;
Grant the young lions when they cry their prey,
Yet suffer His elect to pine away;
Give good to foes, yet ill to those He loves;
Feed the wild ravens, but starve His own doves?

But what is every mercy God can give,
Compared with that by which our souls shall live.
Rise from the ruins of the common fall,
And God in prayer and praise as Abba call.
That ray that broke the darkness of the soul,
That word which burst the chains of hell's control;
Left-handed gifts are all compared with this,
The seed of temporal and eternal bliss;
The pledge and proof of God's eternal grace,
That chose to save thee from a ruined race.
All other blessings follow in its train;
Without it, all but curses and hell's reign;
Then Providence as well as grace is thine,
And thy blest soul shall in heaven's glories shine.
All other providences God but guides,
To bless each child who in His Son confides.

Each grain of wheat more of His culture shares,
More power of love, than a whole world of tares.
For them alone, it is all live and move,
Their names to honor and their virtue prove.
All are but suns to light and cheer their day,
Shields to protect, responses as they pray;
Beacons, directories to mark their road,
To bless them here or in their last abode.
But do not so intent on this, refuse
To labor for your other, and heav'n lose.
They who make haste for riches, often fall
Into the worst of ills that men appal.
As in the once dry isle by Athens' side,
Toiling to make a river through it glide,
The waters rush o'er each oppressing mound,
And as once in the deluge, all are drown'd.

Nor should we e'er forget the love and care,
Which He in our relations did prepare.
If here the God of Heaven thy soul has blest,
His praise should in His gifts be still confest.

How many ill-assorted loves shall meet,
To trample happiness beneath their feet;
But oh, how should our marriage-bard admire
That wisdom which did his blest choice inspire;
Though some thought they knew better far than he,
They would have led him on to misery;
But this did he to Providence confide,
His trust, his hope, and good unfailing guide;
Who ev'ry good, just when he wants, still brings,
And round him spreads her placid halcyon wings.
Nor let us in our offspring e'er disown
The wisdom, care, and kindness Heaven has shown;

The heritage of God be His the praise,

As they still comfort me to my last days;

What power, what grace, what beauties in their mind,

In endless acts do we delight to find.

Nor would I, even here, my spouse forget,

Th' ornamental case in which they're set;

Angels are beautiful, and so are they,

'Tis an attraction whate'er blindness say;

So let not those who would their children hide,

The beauties of my little ones deride;

With envy drest, repining every hour,

Though longing still, exclaim, 'The grapes are sour;'

For cunning pride, each excellence would veil,

Through its own slime another's glories trail.

But let me on this theme no longer stay,

Lest vanity should lead my muse astray;

I do not boast, and if I did, no harm,
Since I with David might the humble charm.
A parent's heart none but a parent knows,
Howe'er their vanity may oft impose.
A grateful heart will learn new flowers to cull;
And richest fruits where'er on earth it dwell;
The bee shall feast as long upon one flower,
As the ox would all in a mead devour.
No mercy, and no sin, can e'er be small,
The infinite discerned alike in all;
Let praise, let penitence, my heart o'erflow,
Thus shall my piety and pleasures grow!

What wondrous ways does Providence employ
To bring His children to election's joy;
Mercies and judgments both alike combine,
The earthly to regenerate and refine.

Oft seeming casual trifle shall convey,
Their wretched wandering feet in wisdom's way;
Phillip shall stand close by the Eunuch's side,
Just when he wishes for a double guide.
Oft nature's gentle passion shall conduct,
To one who shall the ignorant heart instruct,
Not in sectarian folly, pride, and rage,
But that which shall for God the heart engage,
And as love's lulling voice shall prostrate lay
The captive soul, another love obey.
Oft simple book, or tract, or but a word,
Which they and others long had seen and heard,
But never felt, shall be the hallowed power,
When Heaven this blessing on their soul shall shower.

But some will ask, why Providence decrees
To live those vessels, and to perish these:

These, which experience warranted secure,
Those, which she would not for an hour insure.
As well inquire why vice commands success,
In splendour foul,—deform'd in beauty's dress;
While virtue calmly ev'ry wrong sustains,
Great in distress, and grateful, though in chains.
As well, to him of more than shallow head,
As well to him who will not work for bread,
Her ample sweets why fortune deigns to send,
While industry and talents want a friend.
Folly may ask, what wisdom cannot scan,
And children cramp the tow'ring wit of man.

Man knows not half himself, yet will presume,
Upheld by vanity's uncertain plume,
To soar beyond his limited domain,
But wanting strength he sinks to earth again.

Thou self-conceited, anxious being! cease!
And quell the doubt that else will quell thy peace.
Vain are thy weak endeavours to reveal
What Heav'n conceal'd, and ever will conceal.
Think'st thou the ruling Godhead to explore,
On waxen wings ethereal flights to soar!
First bid the fabled lord of ocean's way,
Heave up his waves, and quench the orb of day;
All systems change obedient to his will,
The sun to travel, and the earth stand still:
Or strain thine utmost, feeble in thy might,
By crushing space to make the poles unite.
In spite of genius, and in nature's spite,
Let men of different stamp such themes indite,
At Aganippe's fount, like fishes drink,
And then like learned drunkards, think they think;

Their several stages let them all pursue,
And take the hire which is so much their due.
Truth's my theme, from which I'll not depart,
Whilst strength my nerves, and courage fills my heart.
I will not wander in a dubious maze,
Nor fight at random, nor at darkness gaze.
Thus I the map of Providence explore,
Never to pry, but only to adore;
With grateful numbers my cold tongue to fill,
And learn submission to His righteous will.
Shall we such good enjoy, yet murm'ring, grieve,
Because small evils we at times receive?
Shall His rich mercies thus my sins outvie,
And yet my God ingratitude descry?
'Tis true, alas! oh point me where you can,
The man ungrateful to his fellow-man,

As I to my best Heavenly Friend have been;
Nor have I one excuse the crime to screen.
Let earth and heav'n alike conspire to groan,
Whilst I the blackest of black sins thus own!
But 'mongst His mercies, foremost let me greet
Those which in sad affliction's school we meet.
Whilst bright prosperity, with glittering charms,
Invites her vot'ries to her open arms,
Smiling in pleasure's silken robes array'd,
Her path, like conqueror's, with fine flowers o'erlaid;
She leads oft to the precipice of pride,
God to forget, and in themselves confide.
Artful, the mirror of deceit applies,
By which she blinds or else deludes their eyes;
Of Folly's earthen cup she bids them drink,
And drives or leaves them to destruction's brink;

Forgetful where they are and where they go,
Heaven's raptures for earth's vain toys they forego.
Adversity, though tearful and austere,
Her looks forbidding and her words severe;
Although the best her dreaded presence flies,
Oft proves the friend of mortals in disguise.
As she pursues through each new devious way,
On terror's wings, the trembling child of clay,
At first she seems to love to strike him down,
And only wears a visage clothed in frown;
But when subdued, he dares no more contend,
Will though reluctant, to her sceptre bend;
Her rigid discipline shall soon disarm
His pangs and fears, and even wear a charm.
Taught by her lessons their own hearts to know,
And what to God and Providence they owe.

From falsehood's murky mist she clears their sight,
Illumes their once dark minds with virtue's light.
Now hardy bids them burst soft pleasure's band,
And firm on duty's bulwark fearless stand.
Each lawless passion feels her just control,
And reason, conscience soon regain the soul;
Thus spangled, like spring gems the wintry sod,
Fits man for commune both with man and God;
Refines the heart, exalts the drooping soul,
And e'en soothes the pathway to life's goal.
'Tis ever thus with those whom God approves,
He soothes the sacred smart, and then removes.
Far from being angry whilst their soul He strikes,
He most chastises those whom most He likes;
They thus experience more of His wise care,
And in far larger benefactions share.

Tuition, med'cine, cordials to the heart,
His fondest love delights thus to impart.
Dainties the sick man's palate may allure,
But bitters and low reg'men only cure.
The sportive child would from his tutor stray,
And pass in foolish freaks his time away.
Without experience how can christians thrive,
But 'tis the honied sting that rears the hive.
Shall the great Paul such sharp afflictions need,
And shall not we our steps to heaven to speed?
Whate'er is lost far more is thus attained;
Thus Jacob lost a joint, a blessing gained.
It is a needful magnifying glass,
Through which each precept and each promise pass,
The duties which they long have left undone,
God's love more glowing than the summer sun;

The fickleness of all things here below,

Seraphic joys that Heaven will soon bestow.

Now whilst the smart of man's proud ire they feel,

Does God His strength and succour best reveal;

What was before but lead comes forth as gold,

On which God does His own impress behold.

Bright stars which never in the day could shine

Shall night's dark firmament with glory line.

Faith now becomes heroic in the fight,

And puts forth deeds of valor and of might.

The passive virtues, brightest of the whole,

Shall now expand within the christian soul.

Such as the angels never once display,

The tear profuse now softens the hard clay;

They love religion for itself, and own

That now, for the first time, its worth is known;

More amiable and lovely in their eyes,
For its fair beauty than its glorious prize,
And often now in sympathies they share,
That seem to scent with love the breezy air;
The once flint heart now feels at ev'ry pore,
And learns to muse on what her Sav'our bore.
Glories which, when earth's chandeleers did burn,
Their dazzled eyes could never once discern,
Now burst upon their fond enraptured sight,
More beautiful and brilliant for the night.
By things in which both friends and foes concur,
The most opposed as means, will God prefer,
To carry forward each great ample scheme,
And thus prove Providence alone Supreme;
That man, both friend and foe alike, is dust,
And none but wisely in Jehovah trust.

As contrasts in a picture, to our glance,
The beauty, glory, of the whole enhance;
As in some engines you shall often see,
Their contrary motions all at length agree;
So here, as all does on Himself depend,
All is in order to the one same end,
However contrary it may long appear,
Howe'er His path be cloudy, winding, drear.
Thus when His people felt the serpents' sting,
He did their health and strange salvation bring
By brazen serpent; whilst the brass we know,
Does of itself but aggravate the woe.
Thus shall He for His servant Joseph, pave
The path to glory, whilst a dungeon slave;
And thus when on th' accursed tree He fell,
Did Jesus spoil and wound the powers of hell.

As blackest night oft follows brightest day,
The darkest adverse, the most prosperous, gay,
So shall the worst of ills that heart can brave,
Oceans of tears that furrowed cheeks can lave,
Through His all-skilful and controlling will,
The wisest wisdom, kindest love fulfil.
How many ways unknown, has God to lead
His people to that end where all proceed,
Which makes all work together for their weal,
The scourge that wounds, the palliatives that heal.
More certain than sure pilot's vigils keep,
Directed by the compass 'long the deep,
Does this blest promise Providence still guide,
The sure pole-star in which the saints confide.
Believe, then, ev'ry least thing for the best,
God's grace and glory shall be thus confest.

But, oh, to those who will not do His will,
Or love His name, all ever works for ill,
As when in waters 'whelmed, proud Pharaoh cried,
"I see Jehovah is on Israel's side;
O let us turn our backs and swiftly flee,
Both earth and heav'n enraged contend with me;"
Thus shall each blessing prove a double curse,
Each privilege but in pain and guilt immerse,
Each blossom but a blight, each friend a foe,
The joys of earth enhance eternal woe;
God, earth, hell, the wide universe, conspire,
To stigmatize and rain down brimstone fire.
Oh, what a strange, an atheist sight, is this,
To see the righteous envying sinners' bliss;
That Providence their foolish heart offends,
Because prosperity their path attends;

Although there's nothing that can prove more sure,
That only good can to the good endure,
That all else is but a fallacious dream,
Or else a comet scorching with its beam.
Unequal Providence below may be,
Though not so often as men think they see.
Those who proud ornaments and honors vaunt,
Wisdom, the soul's best jewel, often want.
Great treasure and great trouble oft combine;
A running sore will oft fine purple line.
They wallow oft in riot, health, and ease,
Their bodies to torment instead of please;
Whilst with their golden time thus forced to part,
Cares, fears, and broils will rack their aching heart.
The mighty prince as many cares oppress,
As he shall in his empire men possess.

As one who greatness estimated, said,
That no crown should emblazon his raised head;
If he must stoop to take it from his feet,
And pricking thorns with gold and jewels meet.
How envy, pride, and littleness, will thrush
Their deadly blows, in hopes that they may crush
The wrangler for high station, who but gains
New joys and honors but to feel new pains.
'Tis true in outward things there'll ever be,
A seeming rude, false inequality;
But this law rules in heaven as well as earth,
Though not as here, despite of moral worth:
This, in itself, both good, and just, and wise,
Which order with variety comprise.
God is not careless, but on each bestows,
What best for him, and best for all, He knows;

But far more frequent, vice and virtue lend,
Each to His own appointed moral end.
Howe'er His hand may long seem to caress,
Those who forget Him God can never bless;
And though harsh thunders roll but to dismay,
Briers and foes obstruct the good man's way;
Though his sun seems to set as ne'er to rise,
And howling storms disturb his once fair skies;
Still all as true as dream which Joseph told,
Shall shortly death and life to both unfold:
Though the sun shine, and the soft shadows drop
Upon their path, and nature seem to stop;
Listen obedient to their high behest;
Can those who know and love not God be blest?
Can they, fair, beautiful, with truth be styl'd,
Whose souls are loathsome, filthy, and defiled?

Still stung with care, and gnawn by envy's fire,
Distracted by unsatiable desire;
Whilst pride, and lust, and ev'ry passion bring,
A brood of vipers, each a separate sting;
Whilst they God's image in their souls efface,
And live and act the little, mean, and base;
Whilst satan, the worst tyrant, slaves their soul,
And nought that's heavenly e'er their thoughts controul;
Who but lost fools to such shall lift their eyes,
And style them happy, rich, good, great, or wise?
Can silken curtains, or a bride's attire,
Give bliss to those just ready to expire?
Howe'er the wicked's wealth and honor grow,
Sin is their plague-spot, and their curse and woe;
Their brightest bliss by blacker woes is dashed,
Their sweetest soothings by worst stingings lashed;

Upon their gayest sky that brand is read,
That will the whole with clouds soon overspread:
They do but quaff sweet pleasure's cup to know,
That from this draught hell's direst torments grow.
But, ah, how many thoughts the wisest waste,
Because their minds reel in too eager haste,
And with but partial and imperfect sight,
Decide on what is not yet brought to light;
But single acts or branches often thwart
The good man's hope and all his views distort;
But providence and God will not seem true,
Till the all-great and glorious whole we view.
Far greater difference shall that whole reveal,
Than does the sight of each disjointed wheel;
Each scattered pin which in a watch we see,
And when one frame in working harmony;

Or some far distant sight, which oft deceives
The eye, which credulous, its tale believes;
Or when the skill'd anatomist acquires
That accurate knowledge to which he aspires,
How different from the tyro who to-day
To some small separate joint directs his way!

Let not impatience dare to God presume,
And His prerogatives and throne assume:
There is a time for all things here below,
But who but this the Omniscient God shall know?
Pluck not the fruit until that fruit is ripe,
Or worthless, it will only gnaw and gripe;
Like manna kept by Israel over-night,
Nauseous to taste, and loathsome to the sight.
Dare never once to lift your heart to pray,
Dictating to your God the time or way;

God loves to humble e'er He loves to raise
The soul thus best prepared to sound His praise.
Ere you upon the mount of favor stand,
You must lie trembling 'neath His mighty hand;
The wilderness, that happy land proceed,
Where you on banquets ever new shall feed.
With one heav'n be content! quite incorrect,
Two summers in one season to expect.
Whate'er is best, whate'er is good, that you
In thought and feeling should enjoy and view,
More certain than th' instructor of our youth,
Shall lead them on to some next higher truth;
More certain than the parent shall bestow,
New joys and treasures as his children grow,
Shall God in wisdom gradually reveal,
And cause you all His rapturous love to feel.

Racking impatience! leave this wretched heart,
For faith and patience to perform their part!
If God delays, 'tis to secure His end,
The mercy richer, from a greater friend.
Still praying, watching, striving ev'ry hour,
Let me not thus convert the sweet to sour;
Promise and hope, to fear and threat'ning change,
And God's wise love and counsel disarrange.
But shallow weakness, where ne'er angels fly,
Into Heaven's secrets to presume to pry;
Vain, impotent, with Deity t'engage,
Conflict of arm or argument to wage.
I can but my own sin and folly prove,
Hoping the mountains of heaven's brass to move.
Nor is it best that I should have my will,
My heart with folly and with sin to fill;

My feet in wild temptation's maze to roam;
There lost for ever, lest He bring me home.
That will which oft is but the devil's whim,
Which as it comes from so returns to him;
That will, a compound of blind lust and pride,
Which lays Heaven's loving counsels all aside.
But only let me wait, request, desire,
To this as to my greatest good aspire.
Father of earth and heaven! Thy will be done!
In heaven completed as on earth begun!
My feeble agency with His still moved,
And by myself, as by Himself approved;
Not senseless, forced, or abject, though resigned,
But with a willing heart, an active mind;
Pleased only with what shall my Father please,
Spread all my sail t'obey each rising breeze.

But oh! what poet's glowing page could tell,
If even here we see and say "It's well."
If in this twilight life we often find
Such depth's and beauties riveting our mind,
If here, when some small parts their acts unfold,
And spread their ensign far as eye behold;
When words, too dry, lose all their vaunted force,
And, overcome, to tears we have recourse;
When though the memory did at first retain,
Will hear a hundred times, or loud complain;
Alps upon Alps still meet our wondering eyes,
And as fair science whispers, skies on skies;
And we with wings, on which ne'er eagle flew,
The path of joy and glory still pursue.
When from our prisons we seem fit to bound,
And like some guardian angel soar around,

Grasp every form in love our tale to tell,
How each conspired our happy hearts to swell;
As if we'd stop Heav'n's monarch in His race,
Instead of Him to smile on every place;
Guard ev'ry glade, and hallow ev'ry glen,
And fill with rapture all th' abodes of men.
If such the thoughts and feelings which we know,
Like lights from northern clime, burst out below,
To dress for once earth's black, starved soil in green,
And brighten with heaven's sun th' enchanting scene;
As if the loveliest day that spring e'er made,
The fairest in gay summer's noon parade,
The richest in which autumn's golden store,
Laden with blessings did its treasures pour,
All blended in but one did thus succeed,
And from the direst winter knew was freed.

If thus delicious joy overwhelm the heart,
Where we see dimly and but know in part;
If we such wisdom and such riches trace,
In some small, obscure, and forgotten place,
How shall that day by rapture's note be hailed,
By countless millions shouted, as bewailed,
When ev'ry darkest line shall burn as bright,
As though just struck off from His throne of light;
Each crooked line as straight seen to depart
Just from the centre of His loving heart.
Both in ourselves, our friends, and myriads more,
What wondrous scenes of mercy there explore;
How hear with rapture on some heavenly hill,
Each saint the plains with earth-born pœans fill;
Recount to us and all around, the road
Which led him to his present blest abode;

How beg angelic spirits from their seat,
God's ways since time began again repeat;
Again, again, never the ear to dull,
Of what the whole and ev'ry saint befell.
If but some stones which we may now descry,
Which from that temple in disorder lie,
One arch alone in fair and perfect form,
Now awe the soul and melt it with its charm;
Oh, who can tell when the whole pile we see,
The structure finished from eternity;
How ravished ev'ry eye will hail the sight,
Glory in the Supreme's wise love and might?
When the last top stone here on earth is laid,
And every part of the saint's heav'n is paved;
When we the wilderness from Canaan see,
And how most different things did most agree;

How troubles, toils, did each conspire to raise
An everlasting anthem to His praise.
As we examine oft that wondrous frame,
And find it everywhere throughout the same,
How each and all were linked within the train,
Not the least one in the connexion vain;
How orderly, effectually, they wrought,
To yield more than in ev'ry prayer we sought,
How all our prayers, and what is more than this,
The source, perfection, triumph, of our bliss;
How all the Incarnate One did here below,
Both all His righteousness and all His woe,
And all the prayers which 'fore His father's throne,
He has offered up for each, and all alone;
How they still follow, and must ever be
Our exaltation through eternity.

What wisdom, and what kindness, and what care,
And what results, what bliss beyond compare!
All that too intricate did here perplex,
Or crook within our lot, our bosom vex,
At which amazed, we often stumbled, quailed,
Unjustly censured, bitterly bewailed:
When longing on destruction's brink we gaped,
What dangers and what mis'ries we escaped;
How oft if to our own false counsels left,
We should have been of all that's good bereft;
How oft our own tormentors, yea, what's worse,
Our own foul executioners the first;
If that kind voice which once exclaimed "forbear,"
Did not for us another path prepare,
The best of saints would here, just like His foes,
God's glory and their own true bliss oppose;

How oft our wretched projects set aside,
That God might better, greater far, provide.
But this truth we shall never fully learn,
Until its glories we in heav'n discern;
Each nice adjustment, balance of His skill,
Which made each one and all fulfil His will;
Mercies and judgments tempered to preserve
Those who to pride or to despair would swerve.

Then let us when cast down and still in doubt,
And searching still we never can search out,
Judge nothing but what's plain, before the time,
Disjointed now, then perfect and sublime.
Grief here will ring its changes on our heart,
And e'en the best, most sensitive, must smart;
And though but short the longest life below,
Moments will still seem ages of long woe;

Yet may we still by faith and grace perceive,
However hard it may be to believe,
That what we know not now, we shall know there,
For which these mysteries shall our souls prepare;
However cloudy now the troubled scene,
Our sun in that clime ever shine serene.
Let us not precious time and thought consume,
Where duty, hope, and happiness, should bloom.
On Providence rely from day to day,
Whate'er it has been, or whate'er it may.
Such sufferings He will never once reject,
Who in the fires of Providence has met
The Lord of Glory, that once taught the way,
And on His path still sheds a bright'ning ray;
Whose spirit and whose providence sustain,
'Mid scorn and losses, and each varied pain.

The laurels of proud fame, each myrtle bough,
Forsake all others to adorn his brow.
The great victorious heroes who have blazed
Like constellations on their throne, amazed,
Aghast, retire, to see themselves outdone,
And from the saint the suffering conqueror run.
No longer they adorn th' Olympic game,
Those glorious cyphers now have lost their fame.
Nature's great folios formerly they were,
They now but duodecimos appear;
Into their glittering armour quickly shrunk,
Shorn of their foliage save their trembling trunk;
Whilst others, 'mongst the pompous great retire,
And lie forgotten, only to admire
How 'fenceless man undaunted shall appear,
His very nakedness preserve from fear;

And when the tyrant darts death from his eyes,
His hect'ring sentence scornfully despise.
His conscience pure, his life unstained from sin,
All brass without and golden peace within;
As once the victim on the altar lay,
Expecting Heav'n acceptance would display,
So, with a conscience good and pure, he prays
His suff'rings may proclaim his Maker's praise,
That as his Saviour shed His precious blood,
And from His sides gushed forth the holy flood,
When on th' accursed tree, He hung to groan,
The tree of life to all but Him alone,
Where hell was by its prisoner captive lead,
And the great slayer, death, slain by the dead;
So with inspired courage, great and brave,
He bids defiance to the vanquished grave.

Like to the Roman Scevola He'll stand,
Bathing in flames His salamander hand,
And by that faith which Heaven loves to inspire,
He fearless goes to be baptized in fire;
Like the Arabian bird herself intombs,
A willing sacrifice, in sweet perfumes.
But he is the true bird of paradise,
For whom the angels from their seats arise,
All bliss and glory towards this earth repair,
To waft his spirit through the ambient air,
Where to th' eternal rapture of his heart,
Show their commission for his better part;
And he with joys unutterable, still sings
His hallelujahs to the King of kings.
Few, small, and short, the ills that mortals know,
Let me but dread those dreadful shades below;

To die is but to live, to live to die,

Then let me covet joys beyond the sky!

END OF CANTO III.

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